Elizabeth Cahill
YEATS IN NEW YORK

COMMONWEAL

A Review of Religion, Politics, and Culture

August 13, 1999

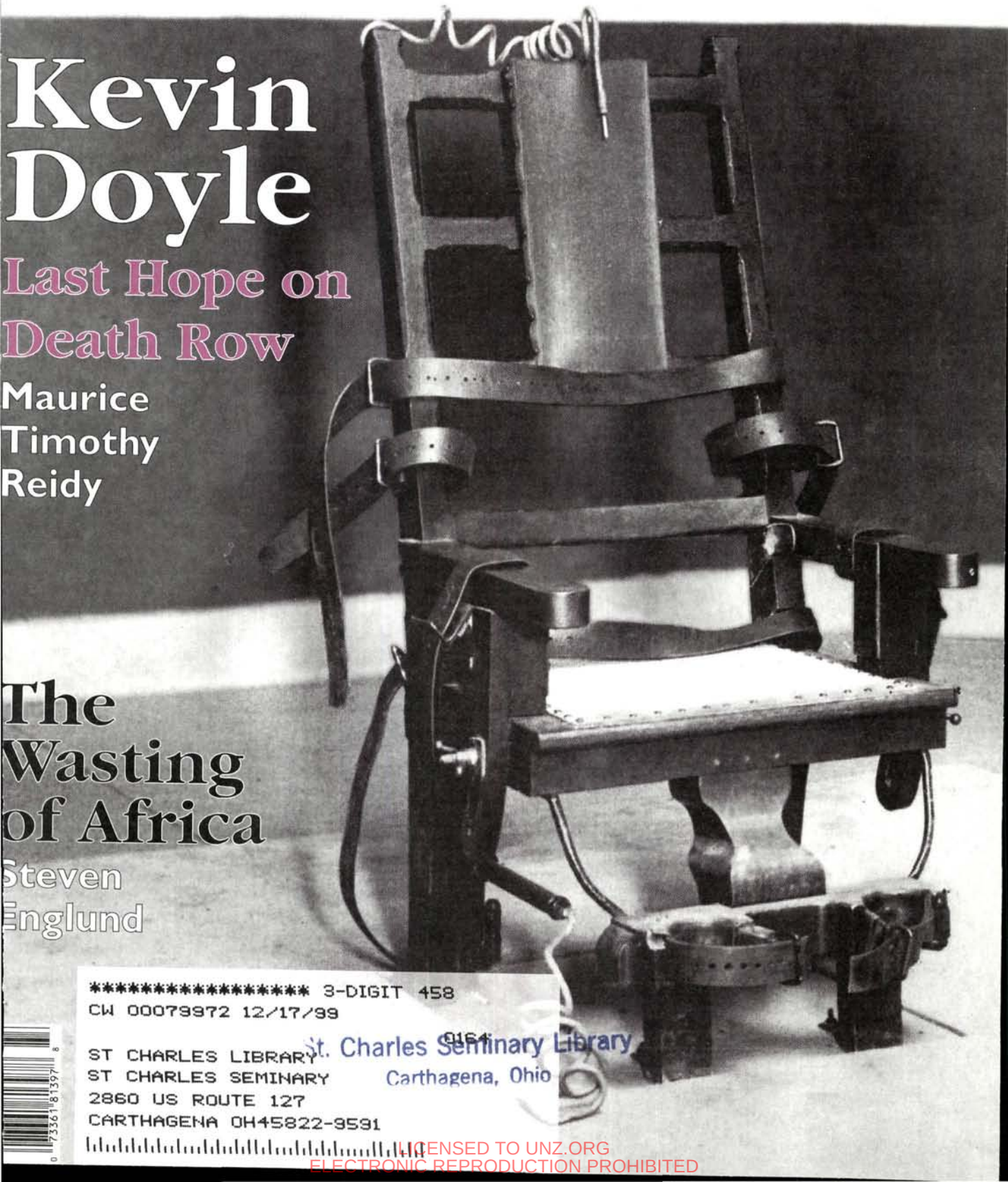
Kevin Doyle

Last Hope on Death Row

Maurice Timothy Reidy

The Wasting of Africa

Steven Englund



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COMMONWEAL

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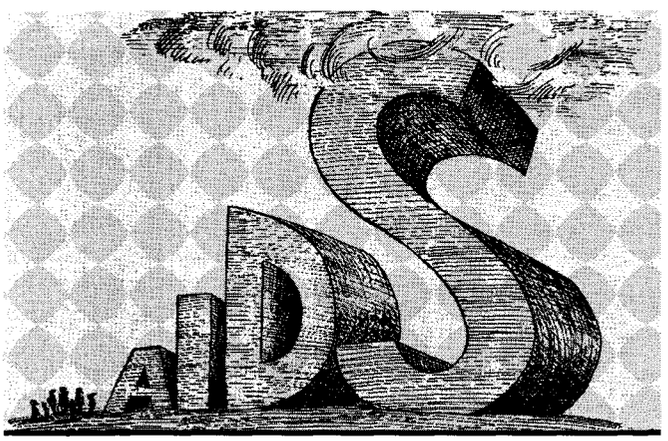

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To the Editors

Objectively wrong

I'm very glad reviewer Mary Midgely liked my *Manifesto of a Passionate Moderate* [May 21]. But I should draw attention to a mistake—or perhaps it's a recurrent typo—in the review. The founder of pragmatism was Charles Sanders Peirce (with an "ei," pronounced "Purse"), not Pierce.

SUSAN HAACK
Coral Gables, Fla.

Dubious research

I was both intrigued by and appreciative of Daniel Callahan's article ["Scientific Research," May 21] suggesting a need for skepticism about current medical research. Still, I have a significant disagreement with him having to do with fetal brain cellular implantation when he says that a particular treatment for Parkinson's disease shows a "fair promise of working." Nothing could be further from the truth. He is referring to a formal brain operation requiring the stereotaxic introduction and depositing of a small fetal brain graft in a precise location in the depths of the patient's brain. As a neurosurgeon, I am totally unimpressed by the clinical results from this invasive surgical methodology. What little symptomatic improvement has been reported in a very small group of patients is simply the result of an injury artifact caused by the instrument, a thin cannula used for placing the transplant, causing damage to the brain tissue. (This is the exact region where a destructive legion is created to reduce the symptoms of this tragic neurodegenerative disease.)

This operative procedure is immoral for two reasons. First, it utilizes living fetal brain tissue (requiring six to eight fetuses to gain sufficient cerebral material for grafting), and second, the operation itself is without scientific justification—it is simply a bad operation.

If all that were not bad enough, there is now a NRH protocol requiring that a control group be created within the framework of this type of surgery in which the patients have burr holes (small openings) placed into their skulls, even though they will not undergo the complete operation (the intracerebral placement of the brain transplant) until some future time. These of course are not totally safe undertakings. This has been referred to as sham or placebo surgery; one more serious moral dilemma.

Callahan's overall critique of contemporary medical research in this country can be amplified. He is perfectly right that we overestimate and overpublicize this work and often promise miracles that will never come to pass. More importantly, biotechnology has lost its moral compass in its attempt to redesign the human existence.

ROBERT J. WHITE, M.D.
Cleveland, Ohio

The writer is professor of neurological surgery in the School of Medicine, Case Western University.

The author replies:

Dr. White may well be correct that the research on the use of fetal tissue to treat Parkinson's disease did not prove as much as some of the journalistic accounts—or the hopes of the researchers—seemed to suggest. I am not competent to judge the science.

But if the research has not achieved any significant results so far, it is certain that further research will be undertaken to improve the outcome. What will Dr. White say if, some day, the research is finally successful? The public, science, and the media will surely be thrilled. A way to deal with a terrible disease,

(Continued on page 29)

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An eerie echo

It was hard not to be both appalled and fascinated by the media coverage of the death of John F. Kennedy, Jr. The omnivorous appetite for copy and spectacle that fuels TV news networks like CNN and MSNBC has pushed the more venerable networks toward similar excess. As a consequence, the tragedy was covered at absurd length. For an entire week the airwaves and headlines were dominated by the futile search for Kennedy's plane, then its eventual discovery along with the bodies of Kennedy, his wife Carolyn, and her sister Lauren Bessette, the subsequent commitment of ashes to the sea off of Martha's Vineyard, and finally the memorial services in New York City and Connecticut. Lacking incident and the possibility of dramatic development, the news story turned to the past—to the Kennedy presidency and the thousand days of "Camelot"—and to the shadows the past continues to throw on the present.

Many thought interest in Kennedy's fate amounted to little more than gossip. But the death under tragic circumstances of an assassinated president's only son—moreover a son who shared much of his father's charisma and grace—is news. Nor is there any denying the heartfelt if inchoate grief felt by millions of Americans who saw in this latest and most inexplicable Kennedy loss an eerie echo of the trauma visited on the nation by the murder of a young president.

To be sure, there is something inherently trivializing about television's remorseless pace and pictorial style, the corrosive way in which it obliterates the line between public and private life. War is reduced to make-believe, politics to personality, a family's private grief to an object of curiosity and vicarious emotion for millions of strangers. Should the death of an appealing young man whose modest accomplishments he himself never exaggerated be conflated with the very real politics and history of the Kennedy administration? Surely not. John Kennedy, Jr., readily acknowledged that his fame was the result of his father's fame, and little more. Still, his death cannot help but find a place in our national drama.

Much of President Kennedy's own appeal and legacy rested on his youth, his good looks, and the remarkable grace and style with which he and his wife Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy conducted themselves. To that extent, his son was a recognizable heir to his parents' glittering public personae. Even the emphasis on popular culture and entertainment that John Kennedy, Jr., brought to his "political" magazine, *George*, can be seen as an extension of the world of glamour, money, and power his father moved in with such relish. It was not hard to see the father in the son, nor to see why so many people felt the palpable grasp of the past reaching out upon hearing the news of his death.

Perhaps Catholics have further reasons to pause at time like this. John F. Kennedy, Jr., was born the year his father squeaked out a narrow victory over Richard Nixon. Much has changed since 1960, and perhaps no change has been as striking in American culture and politics as the relentless homogenization of differences, especially religious differences. From our present vantage point, it is hard to appreciate fully what a large part Kennedy's Catholicism played in that presidential campaign. Blatant anti-Catholic sentiment helped to defeat Al Smith in 1928. Only thirty-two years later, handsome "Jack" Kennedy's unique blend

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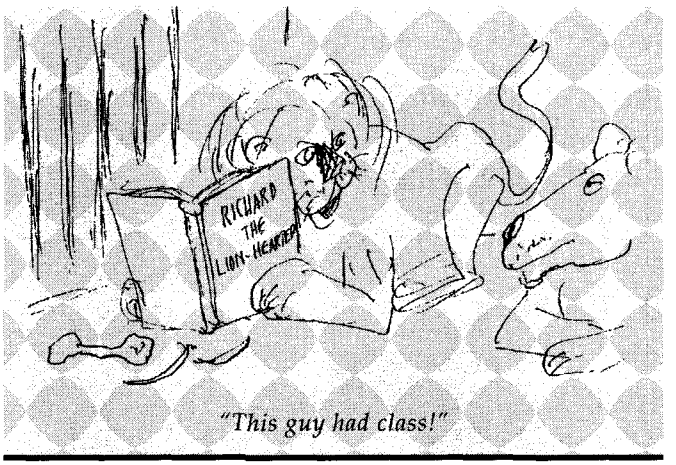


"This guy had class!"

of urbanity, money, youth, and wit—and then martyrdom—changed that religious and ethnic equation forever.

One is now struck by the fact that the media and the American public did not look at his son's Catholicism with any particular suspicion—or perhaps even interest. John Cogley, writing in these pages after Kennedy was assassinated, put it this way: "John Fitzgerald Kennedy served his church as brilliantly as he served his country. He did so, not by being the first Catholic president but by being the first American president who was a Catholic" ("Kennedy the Catholic," January 10, 1964). Cogley, who helped Kennedy formulate a politically effective response to questions about the possible conflict between his loyalty to the church and his constitutional duties, went even further in his assessment of Kennedy. "John F. Kennedy probably had more influence on the future of the American church than any Catholic, lay or clerical, in the history of the nation....He was the quintessential modern man....Yet, his catholicity was as much a part of him as his modernity. He wore both of them as unselfconsciously and elegantly as he wore his London clothes."

Obviously that was not a theological assessment in any strict sense. Certainly it can be said that Kennedy often wore his Catholicism all too lightly—both in public and private. Cogley's confidence in Catholicism's ability to stand on equal terms with modernity now seems dated. Nevertheless, he was right to emphasize the determination of American Catholics to embrace both their religion and the modern world. In that sense, Kennedy's election was not the triumph of the Catholic ghetto but its epitaph.

His son's untimely death reminds us that in America questions that fundamentally shape a father's life—and once excited the fiercest of passions on all sides—can recede in the course of a generation. In taking the measure of John Kennedy, Jr.'s short time among us, we inevitably take the measure of the forty years since what was for so long thought impossible—a Catholic in the White House—came to pass. In mourning John Kennedy, Jr.'s passing we are reminded of how much changed on election day in 1960. Catholics, it turned out, were more like the rest of America than either they or the rest of America imagined. That remains, it seems fair to say, both a blessing and a challenge.

In keeping with *Commonweal*'s usual schedule, only one issue is published each month during July and August. The next issue will be dated September 10.

ET CETERA

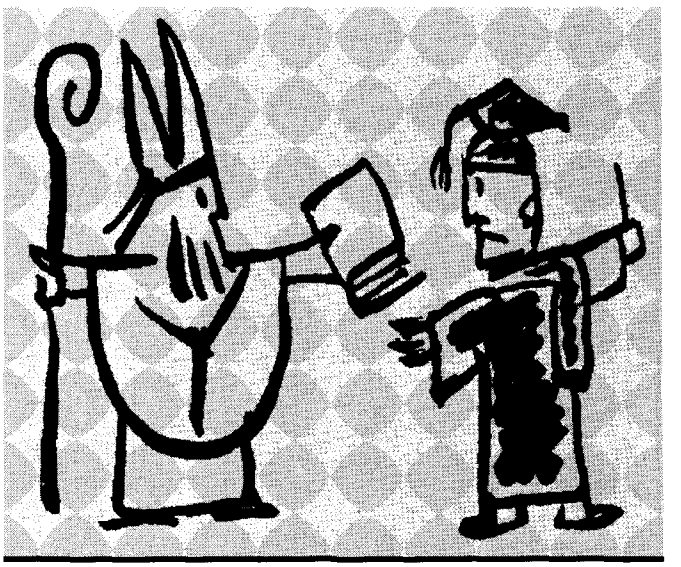
CARDINAL & PARACLETE ■ "I'm a browser," Cardinal John O'Connor declared last month. An old-fashioned bookstore browser, he meant, not the Internet variety. His column in the July 1 issue of *Catholic New York* made an important point about a different kind of endangered species and mentioned one of our favorite places as well.

"There's nothing quite so hypnotic as browsing through a bookstore, or quite so satisfying," he wrote. "There aren't too many browsing options available, however, if your interest is in Catholic books or other high-quality religious works.

"That makes the Paraclete Book Center a vital resource—that and the cordiality of its owners and operators, the diversity of its volumes, the convenience of its location at 146 E. 74th Street in Manhattan....

"There can be no question of the value of Catholic bookstores in the heart of this big, busy city, whether it be Paraclete or any others. There is a question, however, about how much longer any Catholic bookstores will be able to survive. Their loss would be a pity no matter how easy it may be to shop by Internet or in some other discreet but impersonal fashion. Books are meant to be taken off shelves or out of stalls or from the tops of tables and looked at, held in the hand while leafing though the index, compared with a half-dozen other works sitting nearby."

"I'd be happy to join with like-minded browsers in a crusade to Save Our Catholic Bookstores," the cardinal wrote. But in the meantime, he added, "I am worried about this gentle gem on 74th Street that deserves its name of Paraclete." So are we, and Cardinal O'Connor's attention is appreciated.



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From the archives

Throughout 1999, Commonweal *will be celebrating its 75th anniversary. Here from the August 24, 1962 issue is "The City of Rome Prepares" by former associate editor-at-large, the well-known author Michael Novak.*

Rome is sweltering hot this summer. Stepping out from the cool interior of Saint Peter's, one meets rolling waves of dry heat and a blinding glare from the Piazza. Rome is quiet now, too. The great work of preparation for the council has been concluded. Summaries have been sent out to the bishops of the world, and now, in the summer heat, Rome is settling down to wait for October.

Construction work inside Saint Peter's is proceeding *piano piano*, but steadily. Metal scaffolding runs the length of the great central nave on both sides, supporting rows of graduated platforms on which the seats, tables, and *priedieus* of the nearly three thousand council fathers will be placed. The huge central nave will gradually be closed off from pilgrims and visitors, a building within a building. The throne for Pope John will be in front of the Confession. Lower than he, on his right, will be the rows of cardinals, facing the statue of Saint Peter across the aisle, and then the patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops will take their places facing one another across the wide central aisle. Each section for the bishops holds ten rows, one above the other, six seats to a row; each section will have a loudspeaker and a telephone to the desk of the secretary of the council. Microphones...will make it possible for every speaker to reach the whole assembly. A passage under the bleachers, with stairways to each section, makes access to one another relatively easy.

MICHAEL NOVAK

OF SEVERAL MINDS

JOHN GARVEY

A TRADITION OF CHOICE

What it means to be an American

"To be a Serb is to be Orthodox." This remark, made in the context of the current horrors in Kosovo, made me think about what tradition itself has come to mean, and what America has made of it.

The remark no doubt has its truth, as it might also be true to say that to be Polish is to be Catholic. There are nations and nationalities where religion and ethnicity are nearly congruent—this is true of Jews, for example, or Armenians. Memories are long: Serbs see themselves as perpetually at war with the Turks; I know Irish-Americans who think it is a matter of honor to hate the Brits. Your nationality gives you a kind of ready-made identity, complete with a religion, and some hatreds you are allowed to treat as honorable.

A Serb would find it much easier to understand a nonbelieving Serb than, say, a Catholic or Mormon Serb. The nonbeliever has rejected God and religion; but if he had a religion it would have to be Orthodoxy, since that goes with the territory of being Serbian.

America has changed all that for many millions of people. Although we make too much of choice, having too frequently dumbed the idea down to the notion that all choices are equal and all ideas equally valid, in fact, the sense that you are free to pursue what you believe to be right and true, and that this freedom is more important than the fact that you are born into a particular ethnic group, is very much in our blood. And it cannot but affect even the way we hold on to a tradition.

I was born into an Irish Catholic family, became interested in Eastern Orthodoxy when I was in college, and married a woman from the Philippines who became Orthodox six years after I did. I went to the seminary some years after becoming Orthodox, and following ordination I was assigned to a parish which is largely Albanian but has members and visitors who are Greek, Arab, Irish, Eritrean, and others who prefer to attend an English liturgy. This strikes me as being very American.

Even if we try to see beyond the obvious limitations of the individualism which marks so much of American thought, even as we see the problem with making choice a primary virtue, we choose, individually, to belong to traditional religions, or to persist as members. A person who moves from mainstream Protestantism to Catholi-

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cism, or from Catholicism to Orthodoxy, or from Reform Judaism to Orthodox Judaism, has done something very American, in the sense that the tradition is seen as offering a relationship to something true and real; but it does not have an automatic claim on you based on anything other than its truth, and this is true both of the tradition which you leave and the one which you embrace.

The way in which the statement "to be a Serb is to be Orthodox" differs from this is profound. The tradition is seen as having a more or less automatic claim, and it has little to do with whether it is true or not. It is simply a fact of national life, like a form of national music, or a particular kind of sausage. It matters less that Orthodoxy is true than that it is part of the national identity. When this is used as a justification for murder, the land and the nation—and the religion—become false gods, no better than Baal. What is upheld here is not the beginning of a relationship with "the way, the truth, and the life," but something which, far from transforming us, freezes us into a preconceived identity.

There are dangers in the American approach as well. To make your choice of a religious tradition important to your sense of who you are can be to make much too much of yourself, and too little of the tradition. I have noticed (as a lot of priests have, including convert priests like me) that the convert can think of himself as someone who has arrived at something long sought, a home, a final resting place; but to enter a tradition is in fact only to come to a beginning, to the start of a journey. One thing that the old-world sense of tradition offers is true to this extent: The tradition is bigger than you are. It makes claims on you more than you have any right to make claims on it. This sense of the authoritative is alien to the American grain, but it should not be.

Orthodox Christianity in America has, in recent years, gone through something of a crisis. Without going into great detail, the problem at the international level is that the old-world churches regard American Orthodox as people living in a diaspora; we regard ourselves as fully here. (My own bishop has said of the Aleuts in Alaska, a tribe which is predominant ly Orthodox, "Where are they in diaspora *from*?") There are political reasons for much of this crisis, but there is also a difference which has a lot to do with the fact mentioned above: The way in which Americans regard tradition is quite different from the ways in which it is seen by people formed entirely by the experience of Europe, Eastern Europe especially. And even within America there is a serious split between Orthodox who see the need to understand tradition as something that can be adapted pastorally to the needs of modern people, and those who see the church's role as reproducing the piety common in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russia, or on Mount Athos, with no concession to modernity. Ecumenism is distrusted here, where it is not loathed.

The irony is that both of these camps are very much the product of a modern American sensibility. The fact is that even those who think of themselves as the fiercest guardians of tradition have chosen this role in a way that people for most of human history never dreamed of being able to do. We still have a hard time seeing what a radical difference the American sensibility has made, for good as well as for ill, for us and for the rest of the world. □

Steven Englund

DEATH IN AFRICA

AIDS decimates a continent

Early in June, I was an observer at a workshop organized by UNAIDS in Dakar, Senegal, whose purpose was to create an "International Alliance for a Religious Response to AIDS in Africa." The fifty participants were largely people active in the worlds of health care and of religion; many were physicians, several were Protestant pastors, one was a Catholic bishop (from Senegal), several were Muslim imams. Most were from Africa, with participants from France, the Netherlands, and Thailand.

The Thai delegate was a chubby, smiling Buddhist monk in saffron robes and sandals, with the title "Venerable," whose calling card announces he has degrees from Oxford, Harvard, and Chulalongkorn universities. "Venerable" took delight in informing the other delegates at this conference of religious that "there is no god, you know." This didn't knit as many brows as his other reminder, constantly reiterated, that we must not "confuse truth with reality," by which I took him to mean that we ought not confuse our take on what's there with what's actually there. His admonition may

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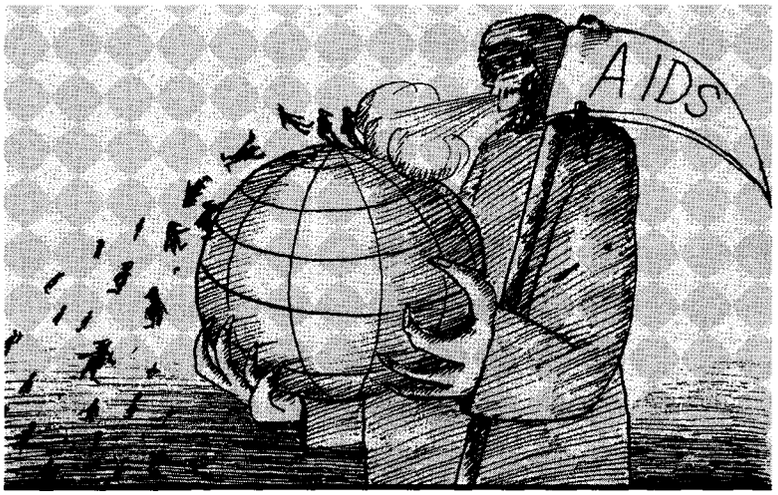
have been superfluous; there was more reality for these participants to conjure with than effective truths to wield.



Looking at the class photo of us all, standing in front of the Hotel Meridien President, sitting on a spit of land that is the most western promontory of all Africa, I am struck by the colorful ness of the costumes, religious and native, and by the cheerfulness of the countenances. We are all smiling with some reason. Differences of religion, language, geography, and disparities of income had not sunk us, nor had the lively rivalry between Anglophone and Francophone countries. We had made the UN-desired "response" and had set up the required "alliance," concretized by a permanent secretariat sitting in Dakar, headed by a pastor who is himself afflicted with HIV.

This about exhausted the smile pretexts. For the rest, the "reality" we confronted with our several "truths" is a light year beyond grim. Sub-Saharan Africa dwarfs the rest of the world on the AIDS balance sheet. Since the start of the epidemic, 83 percent of all AIDS deaths have occurred here. An estimated 34 million people living in this region have been infected, of whom 11.5 million have died, a quarter of them children. That is roughly the population of Argentina and nearly double the population of Australia. By comparison, in the United States and Canada, there are around 890,000 people living with HIV/AIDS; in North Africa and the Middle East, around 210,000 cases.

In 1998 alone, AIDS killed 2 million Africans. In some regions—Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe—it is anyone's guess what percentage of the population aged fifteen to forty-nine is infected with HIV: a quarter? Certainly. A third? Quite likely. In some testing sites in Zimbabwe, 20 to 50 percent of pregnant women were found to be infected. A third of these will pass on the virus to their children. Children born in the next decade will have a life expectancy of just forty years. Without AIDS, it would have been seventy. In one year, thanks to HIV/AIDS, Botswana dropped twenty-six places down the human-development index, a ranking of countries that takes into account wealth, literacy, and life expectancy.

The particular "truth" with which we at the conference were engaged in dubious battle is the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS—the scornful look, the refusal of family or friends to care for you (or even touch you), being fired at your job on a flimsy pretext. The shame attached to HIV/AIDS in this part of the world is so great that people often decline what slight care is available because its acceptance implies acknowledging they have HIV/AIDS. Even among those who are caring for HIV-infected patients, fewer than one in ten admits that the person in their care is suffering from AIDS. It is worse for a woman, who risks being beaten and thrown out of the house by a husband if her medical status is revealed. Nor will it make a scintilla of difference that she was infected by her husband. She, not he, will carry the blame for the deaths of the children. She, more than he, has no hope of being cared for.

In any event, care for persons with AIDS in Africa means, at the very best, a cot to lie and die on, a concerned hand to wipe your forehead, and maybe an aspirin or two. The "cocktail," which has all but put a halt to AIDS deaths in the United States, wasn't once discussed at the Dakar workshop. A high-level Tanzanian health official, a physician, became slightly impatient when I pressed him. "Let me put it this way, Mr. Englund," he said. "If I came down with HIV, there would be no cocktail for me. I doubt we have anyone who even knows how to administer it."

Early and sustained prevention efforts would undoubtedly lower the rates of infection in Africa, as has in fact happened in one or two countries—Senegal being the best-known instance—but for the reasons of shame and stigma. Early and sustained prevention seems to be out of the question for now. To date, only four or five governments out of the thirty-five or so in the region have publicly acknowledged "the invisible epidemic." (The new president of South Africa was one such, but his President's Partnership Against AIDS is an invitation with few takers.)

Thus, the goal of this conference of African religious and health leaders is to try to bring pressure on their governments—organized religion being a more potent force in Africa than in other parts of the world—so that the governments will begin to make public statements and enact public policies. It is a very big hope with a very small budget. The new alliance will have to seek money from donors; it is unlikely that it will ever have $1 million to play with. By contrast, the annual budget of the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York City is between $20 and $25 million.

When the conference ended, participants dispersed without a prayer, partly because nobody wished to arouse differences among the competing religious truths represented, and then too there was so much reality to confront. □

Steven Englund, *a previous contributor, writes on assignment from* UNAIDS, *Geneva.*

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Peter Steinfels

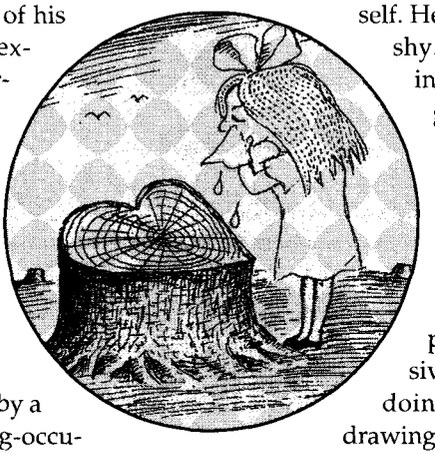
JOSEPH DRUFFEL, R.I.P.

Architect for the poor

"Something is different," my wife Peggy said as we entered Saint Gregory the Great Church on West 90th Street in Manhattan, where we had been parishioners a quarter-century ago and where family and friends were now gathering for the memorial Mass for Joseph Druffel. "I think it's the light," she said.

It was indeed the light. This odd, low church, with its flat ceiling, squats on the ground floor beneath several stories of parish school and rectory. On this June day it had a new glow throughout, and what had been a dull horizontal mural of saints behind the altar now came to life.

The light was Joe's work. "Joseph Druffel, 60, Architect for the Poor," read the headline over his obituary in the *New York Times*. "Mr. Druffel spent most of his career on projects for poor people," it explained. "He worked with a number of organizations in the South Bronx, East Harlem and the West Side of Manhattan...helping design, renovate, and build shelters, housing, and other structures."



Architect for friends, too, for whom he would design a new little this or that to make their apartments more livable. And architect for *Commonweal*, which fell under both those headings.

In 1986, when the magazine was forced by a sharp rent increase to move from its long-occupied Madison Avenue offices in midtown Manhattan, Joe turned a potential disaster on Dutch Street into a triumph. Maneuvering within an absolutely minimal budget, he took raw space in a nondescript building on a virtual alley and created a set of offices, handsome, airy, and congenial, where it was a pleasure to work. Ten years later, when renewal of the magazine's lease unexpectedly fell victim to a grand real estate scheme, Joe came to the rescue again. Redeploying all he could of the existing office's fixtures, he quickly recreated much of its ambiance in a new space.

Light was the key. "Light and air were what he looked for in creating a space," said Sister Mary Nerney in a moving eulogy at Joe's memorial Mass. He had worked with her on a series of projects—play rooms, apartments, offices, whatever was needed for her programs combating domestic violence and aiding incarcerated women, ex-offenders, and their children.

She mentioned his efforts to provide as much natural light as possible for those whose offices were away from windows. It was that way at *Commonweal*, too. And where one section of the Dutch Street office extended beyond the floor above, he made an ordinary conference space special by persuading the landlord to allow a hole to be cut in the concrete roof for a skylight. There was also one place where Joe would spare no expense: the light fixtures. Editors, like surgeons, had to have the very best. In 1997, it became apparent that those painstakingly selected Dutch Street fixtures could not be reused in the new offices and, worse, might have to be abandoned altogether. Joe went with two friends on a weekend and personally salvaged them. They are now lighting classrooms at a neighborhood parochial school and being put to other good uses.

At Saint Gregory's, we sang: *"I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright. Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?"*

Like light, Joe was quiet. "Quiet, peaceful, always there, soft-spoken, precise, accurate, methodical...unassuming, real...." Sister Nerney ticked off some of the ways she had heard Joe's friends describe him. Joe could present his ideas so diffidently that it was hard to tell whether he was waiting for your response or still thinking the matter over himself. He gave the impression of being extremely shy. It never kept him from quietly prevailing over the city bureaucracy or patiently getting a job done just the way he wanted.

Joe had a different idea of the architect's calling than the one typically featured in stories about gorgeous homes, corporate headquarters, or contemporary art museums, a different idea than the one honored by big commissions or prestigious awards. Designing an impressive church was less crucial to him than redoing the lights or (even in his last illness) drawing up plans for a sidewalk renovation at the struggling parish where he worshiped and volunteered in the soup kitchen. That was one of the reasons he had left an architectural firm twenty years earlier. And while it is hard to think of a better tribute than "architect for the poor," Joe was also an architect with the poor, devoting himself to sweat-equity projects, patiently training ex-offender women in the essentials of construction and carpentry.

Like light, Joe could be elusive. Especially about being paid. He never raised the matter. Pay me what you can, when you can, was the message he conveyed. He lived modestly—he could hardly have done otherwise—but he was accustomed to serving those whose resources were slimmer and whose burdens heavier. They were well represented and sang heartily at his memorial Mass, where Sister Nerney speculated that among the many mansions of the Lord there must be some in need of rehabbing.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord. And may perpetual light shine upon him. □

Peter Steinfels, *a former* Commonweal *editor, writes the biweekly "Beliefs" column for the* New York Times.

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DOYLE FOR THE DEFENSE

A lawyer with Catholic convictions

Maurice Timothy Reidy

Kevin Doyle is not a man who has gone unnoticed. As New York State's capital defender since 1995, Doyle holds a high-profile job ensuring that those who face, or may possibly face, New York's recently reinstituted death penalty are competently and vigorously defended. Doyle has been publicly cast as someone with unflagging determination and thick skin, a man willing to go to the mat again and again for clients whom prosecutors and much of the public think deserve the electric chair. In fact, this month Doyle will be helping to appeal the case of Robert Shulman, a convicted serial killer, sentenced to die on August 30. Less noted, however, are the Roman Catholic roots of Doyle's passion for leaping to the defense of unpopular causes, a passion that extends far beyond the courtroom.

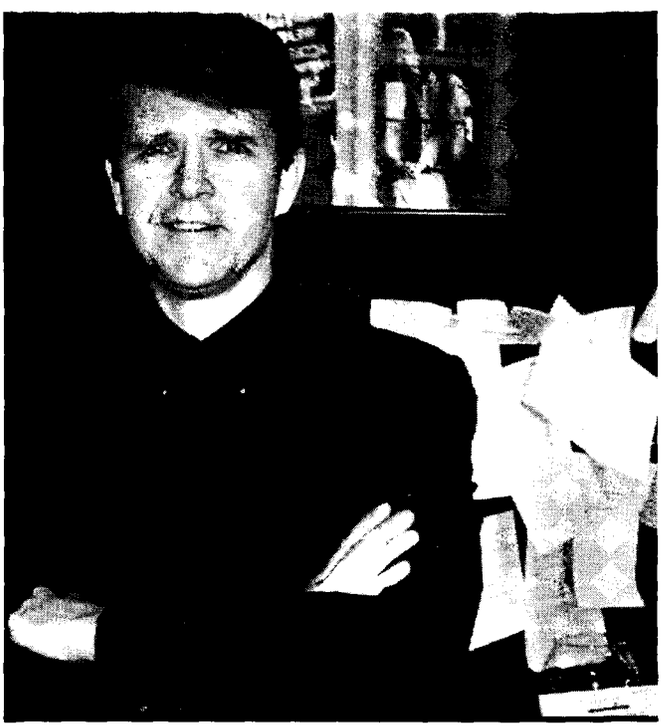
That passion and its roots have been frequently displayed in the correspondence columns of a long list of newspapers and magazines, including this one. Indeed, long before his days as a public official, Doyle made his debut in the *New York Times* letters columns with a sharp plea for fair play in the abortion debate. "Serious and honest discussion is in short supply," wrote the twenty-four-year-old law student in 1980, objecting that an op-ed piece had offered "a bizarre treatment of the issue," framing it, the young Doyle claimed, in terms of "the survival of a patriarchal family structure" while failing "to deal at all with abortion opponents' most cogent contention: the seeming personhood of the fetus." Doyle was not inhibited by the fact that the op-ed piece was written by one of his former Fordham University teachers.

Seventeen years later, he responded to a front-page *New York Times* story about Irish New Yorkers thin on faith and thick on blarney. "I do not begrudge the right of faith-impaired Irish-Americans to bask in the Celtic heritage purged of religious elements," Doyle began. Still, he parried, "could Irish victories in labor organizing have taken place without the Roman Catholic church's support? Locate the Irish faces in photographs of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s civil rights marches. How many are not over Roman collars or under veils?"

Doyle has written so many letters defending Pius XII against accusations that the pontiff was indifferent to the Holocaust that the New York lawyer has wondered out loud whether he should bill the Pacelli family. ("Letters to the editor are a particularly good medium for me because I don't have time to do long articles," Doyle says.)

But correspondence columns are not the only place to get an earful of Doyle's opinions or encounter his dogged sense of mission. In 1995, the forty-three-year-old Doyle was named one of the top hundred Irish-Americans by *Irish America* magazine. During his acceptance speech at a fashionable Manhattan restaurant, he returned the favor by challenging his audience of well-to-do Irish-Americans to see their poor, immigrant forebears in the faces of the minorities who will inevitably line death row. Speaking at a Democratic Socialists Scholars conference last spring, the former altar boy did not endear himself to the liberal-left audience by linking his stand against the death penalty to his opposition to abortion.

Clearly, endearing himself does not rank number one on Kevin Doyle's list of ambitions. His everyday rhetoric and intellectual temperament are steeped in the adversarial culture of the courtroom. And rooting for the underdog—whether it be an unborn child, a much maligned pope, or a teen-ager on death row—seems second nature to him. But



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really to understand Doyle you must appreciate the extent to which his personality and moral stamina have been fueled by what he unabashedly calls "Holy Mother Church."

Doyle's corner office, located in the New York City branch of the Capital Defender Office at 21st Street and Broadway, is a virtual roadmap to his life. Photographs of Fordham and Martin Luther King, Jr., hang on his office walls, as do nineteenth-century anti-Catholic cartoons by Thomas Nast and a poster from the Birmingham, Alabama, Opera Company. Pinned to a bulletin board next to his computer are snapshots of his three children and office memos listing the latest number of "death notices pending."

Doyle talked to me there on a recent afternoon, his feet resting on a computer desk. He responds to a question by furrowing his brow in characteristic fashion and admonishing his Catholic brethren in a spirit reminiscent of his letters to the *Times*: "There are so many Catholics who have by and large experienced the institutional church in a favorable way, but who don't speak up," he says. As for those "who think that they are proving themselves feminists, or champions of racial equality, or champions of tolerance by berating the church for having been sexist, for having persecuted heretics, for having been racist," Doyle declares, "that's pretty cheap contrition."

In moments of self-reflection, Doyle admits his own fallibility. If you had asked him about Pius XII when he was in college, Doyle would have told you that "the poor Jews were being killed and this terrible guy turned his back on them." Subsequently his own research has convinced him that Pius's situation was far more complicated. When it comes to abortion law, Doyle's strict prolife thinking has also evolved. A 1988 letter he wrote to the *Times* argued that the abortifacient RU-486 might be a way to bridge the gap between prolife and prochoice partisans. And he dissents from the Vatican on other things, arguing, for example, that the sacrament of holy orders should be open to women.

To watch Doyle is to see and hear James Cagney cast as Thomas More in *A Man for All Seasons*. He has sandy blond hair, deep blue eyes, and a strong chin. His slight New York accent and colorful language betray a childhood spent in the Fordham section of the Bronx; his knowledge of church doctrine and history expose a quick mind and a Jesuit education.

Kevin Martin Doyle was born in 1956, the fourth of six children. His father, John, was a police officer in the 48th Precinct in the Tremont section of the Bronx. Helen, his mother, cared for the children at home. From an early age, the Doyles tried to imbue their children with a sense of social justice and of the connection between religion and political life. "As limited as my parents may have been in their social contacts and their cultural awareness," Doyle recalls, "they fundamentally understood that Catholicism was completely incompatible with segregation." The concentration-camp number tattooed on the forearm of their Jewish landlord also made a lasting impression: "I don't want to overstate this," Doyle says carefully, "but you would have thought the guy had taken out the Host from under his coat in the sense of the awe that my parents were in."

The Doyles' outlook was partially rooted in the Christian Family Movement (CFM), a parish-based organization dedicated to developing a consciousness, both at home and in the world, based on Christian principles and examples. The parents attended CFM meetings at their Bronx parish, Our Lady of Mercy. African exchange students from nearby Fordham University were often invited for dinner—giving the Doyle clan a chance to encounter people of different races and cultures. The Doyles were initiated into the liturgical reforms of Vatican II at the Fordham University chapel. "When my family lived on West 193rd Street, Fordham struck this kid as a very progressive and promising place," Doyle would eventually write in the university's undergraduate magazine *Point*. "Fordham was just down the block and things seemed to be happening there."

The social-justice message took hold in a big way among the young Doyles. Kevin's two sisters, Mary and Deirdre, both worked for a time in medical care. For his two older brothers, Jack and Brian, Catholic teaching became the basis for opposing the war in Vietnam, while Doyle's younger brother Kieran worked at Legal Aid before entering law school. Today, Jack runs New Settlement Housing in the Bronx and Brian works upstate in Poughkeepsie with the developmentally disabled.

As head of the Capital Defender Office, Doyle supervises a team of twenty lawyers on the state payroll. When a suspect is brought up on a murder charge, Doyle's office is immediately notified. If the suspect requires representation, the Capital Defender Office will provide a lawyer trained in capital law. If the suspect already has a lawyer, Doyle and his colleagues will serve as consultants, helping the suspect's lawyer whenever necessary. If and when a suspect is convicted of murder and sentenced to death, the Capital Defender Office will appeal, or help to appeal, the case. There are currently three people on death row in New York State, ten pending or active cases in which a district attorney is seeking the death penalty, and fifty-six cases in which prosecutors have yet to make a decision.

Doyle himself has his hand in much of what goes on in the Capital Defender Offices in Albany, Rochester, and Manhattan. As principal administrator, he helps manage personnel, talks with the media, and meets with representatives from the private bar who often serve as counsel in capital cases. Doyle advises on each case that his office oversees. (In one instance, he recommended buying a client *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* to help him see that there is a potential for a life of the mind in prison.) But he does not do as much courtroom work now as he once did defending death-row prisoners in Alabama.

"I get a little bit itchy that I'm not doing more courtroom

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work," he reports. "But then I realize that the opportunity to work with people to create an office where constitutional safeguards really mean something in the capital context...is unique. It is a tremendous privilege to recruit and collaborate and learn from the lawyers who are here." Doyle is quick to remind visitors that the Capital Defender Office is made up of a team of people, not just one person.

Those who in 1995 advocated reintroducing capital punishment in New York State predicted that prosecutors would seek the death penalty in 15 to 20 percent of such cases. As of summer 1999, only thirty-six murder defendants (about 1 percent) have faced possible execution and no one has been executed. Although the Capital Defender Office takes no official stand on the death penalty, those opposed to capital punishment have praised its work.

"I don't know of another state in the country that has adopted the death penalty and then four years later—certainly in a state this size—had only a handful of people on the 'row,'" says George H. Kendall of the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund. Indeed, three years into their new statute, despite a corps of well-trained capital defenders, New Jersey had seventeen people on death row, while Pennsylvania had seven.

In total, capital punishment is now legal in thirty-eight states. The desire to levy the death penalty is particularly strong in the South, a section of the country that is responsible for 442 of the 552 people executed in this country since 1976. Still, New York State, the first state to use the electric chair, holds its own infamous records: In particular, according to Doyle, it has wrongfully executed more people than any other state. That record was set, of course, before 1972, when the Supreme Court in *Furman* v. *Georgia* declared death-penalty laws of that time unconstitutional. After that decision was reversed by the Court in 1976, State Senator Dale M. Volker of Erie County sponsored a bill to bring the death penalty back to New York State. Volker would ultimately sponsor seventeen such bills over the next seventeen years—all of them vetoed by Governors Hugh L. Carey and Mario M. Cuomo, both Democrats.

The issue came to the fore in 1994. Running against the outspoken death-penalty opponent Cuomo, Republican gubernatorial candidate George Pataki promised that if elected he would sign a death-penalty bill. In the wake of Cuomo's defeat, the bill was passed by the legislature and signed by the newly elected governor. However, unlike most states with the death penalty, New York established a well-financed Capital Defender Office to represent individuals charged with capital crimes. After an initial search, Arthur Liman, chairman of the board established to create the Capital Defender Office, offered Doyle the job as acting Capital Defender in July 1995. Doyle, eager to help create a strong and effective office, accepted. A few months later, after a more exhaustive search, Doyle was officially named the first capital defender in New York history.

"He had more to offer than a lot of other talented people that had applied," says Kendall of the NAACP, who was consulted during the hiring process and noted that Doyle had practiced in New York both in a big firm and in the public defender's office, and had also tried capital cases in Alabama.

After law school at the University of Virginia, Doyle returned to New York and worked for Legal Aid—the single largest provider of legal counsel for those in need. (He had decided on trial work while working for the general counsel at the NAACP during his summers at law school.) While Doyle handled cases in Brooklyn and the Bronx, his wife, Mary Sullivan, worked as a nurse in the pediatric unit at Sloan Kettering Memorial Hospital in Manhattan. In 1988, after six years with Legal Aid, says Doyle, "my wife and I realized that neither of us had been clever enough to marry into money and we needed a down payment for a new home." To meet that goal, Doyle accepted a position at the Wall Street law firm of Lord Day & Lord, Barrett Smith. Despite the financial rewards, he knew from day one that his stay on Wall Street would be temporary. Doyle would later comment that "defending the powerful is like praying for the soul of Mother Teresa."

An indispensable part of Doyle's preparation for his present post took place in Alabama, a state notable for its eagerness to impose capital justice. (There are currently 178 persons on Alabama's death row.) While at Lord Day, Doyle did *pro bono* work for Daryl Watkins, a death-row prisoner in Alabama. Watkins had been convicted of killing a police officer and a butcher. Thanks in part to Doyle's efforts, Watkins is now serving a life sentence without parole.

For Doyle, working on capital cases was the ultimate realization of his callings as a lawyer and as a Catholic. For

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one, he believes that the death penalty is racist because more members of minority groups are on death row than whites. He sees his work as an extension of civil rights—a cause planted in him as a child and nourished by his love for Martin Luther King, Jr. Second, this task allowed him to defend human life and thereby enlarge his prolife position on abortion. Third, it gave the preacher in him the chance to teach the Catholic understanding of human fallibility and forgiveness. When given the chance to work full-time defending death-row prisoners for the nonprofit Alabama Capital Representation Center, Doyle accepted and moved his family to Birmingham in 1990.

Doyle's work often set him apart in Alabama, a state where political and religious justifications for the death penalty are deeply entrenched. In one instance, an eyewitness to a murder berated him for representing the accused: "Mr. Doyle, tonight you will be in my prayers. Yes, tonight I will ask the Lord to punish you for what you are doing." Despite such admonitions, the Fordham graduate wasn't afraid to rely on his own vision of Christianity to challenge both judge and jury in defending against the death penalty. In his final summation to the jury before the sentencing of Willie Williams, a man who had pled guilty to killing his girlfriend, Doyle ended with these words: "Please, follow the law by the light of your faith and do what Jesus would do." Williams is serving a sentence of life without parole.

When Kevin Doyle and Mary Sullivan arrived in Birmingham, they planned to stay two years. The desperate need for qualified capital defenders kept them there much longer. Only in June 1995 did the family return to New York, a decision based on the knowledge that they weren't going to live in Alabama forever and an eagerness for a permanent home for their three children. Less than a month later, Doyle began work as New York's acting capital defender.

In many ways, Doyle's appointment can be seen as the fruition of his parents' active involvement in the church. As a boy growing up in the Bronx, Doyle would argue over civil rights with other children. Later, after his family moved across the Hudson to Rockland County, he campaigned for George McGovern while attending Bergen Catholic High School. At the time, the teen-age Doyle believed that the Democratic party was the "best vehicle for achieving Catholic social justice." As a Fordham undergraduate, he once described his political affiliation as "*Pacem in terris*-Jeffersonian Democrat—belief in human rights for individuals in both political and economic realms though avoiding any dogmatisms." Doyle would later feel compelled to abandon the Democratic party because of its unyielding prochoice platform.

"I think it takes some time for people to find their voice," says Charles Kelly, Doyle's college roommate. "Kevin found it quicker than the rest of us." In addition to what Kelly calls Doyle's "razor-sharp mind," Doyle had a sharp tongue. Jim Dwyer, Pulitzer Prize columnist for the *New York Daily News* and one of Doyle's closest friends, recalls his first impressions of Doyle: "He was no shrinking violet, even with a stranger." But despite his talent for caustic remarks, Doyle wasn't one to flaunt his intellect. "He didn't alienate us; he actually drew us into the debate, whatever it happened to be," remembers Kelly, "everything from the Kennedys, to McCarthy-era matters, to European intellectual history."

Doyle employed these traits when writing for *Point* magazine, a student opinion publication modeled on periodicals like *Commonweal*. (Doyle briefly interned at *Commonweal* in 1978—a place where contentious debate seemed like "hog heaven" to the future lawyer.) When Thomas A. Murphy, the General Motors chairman, spoke at the university's 1977 commencement, Doyle questioned the captain of industry for attempting to minimize the differences between Catholicism and capitalism. "It always amazes me," Doyle wrote in *Point*, "that Catholics like Murphy can convince themselves that they have had the extraordinary luck of being born into the two true faiths: Roman Catholicism and American capitalism. Still more incredible is that Murphy-types not only fail to perceive intrafaith conflicts, but actually regard their creeds as mutually reinforcing."

Raymond Schroth, S.J. (an associate editor at *Commonweal* from 1973 to 1979), who taught Doyle and advised *Point*, was proud of his pupil. "I think a lot of my friends were deeply offended by Murphy's talk, but fortunately we had Kevin," Schroth recalls.

Doyle began law school at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville in 1979. For him, law school was a place to indulge his passion for "ascertaining truth through argument" while working out on a practical level his commitment to Catholic social justice. "I'm not sure if this was a good part of the sixties ethos or not," Doyle recalls, "but there was a very anti-ivory tower point of view. You had to be engaged in the world, doing practical things, and changing things. I was certainly not left with the impression that you could serve social justice by writing books."

It was at Virginia that Doyle met Mary Sullivan, a graduate nursing student. "We disliked each other intensely for a year," Doyle recalls with a laugh, "and then we started dating." Sullivan's recollections shed a little more light on the situation: "When I first met Kevin, I was sort of going through an anti-Irish, anti-Catholic phase. He was always identified as an Irish Catholic, so I decided that whatever he said I was going to disagree with, which I did. I think he enjoyed that. It was probably the best thing I could have done to keep Kevin interested in me." They married in 1982.

Despite his hectic seven-day work week and trips to the Capital Defender Offices in upstate New York, Doyle has not been wholly defined by his job. As his letters indicate, citizenship is important to him, and the glibness of much political and religious commentary is a source of annoyance. "It amazes me that we're trying to have a republic here, considering how little homework the citizens do," Doyle says.

His sharply worded letters have rustled a few feathers.

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Bernice Rosenthal, the Fordham professor whose *Times* op-ed piece on abortion provoked Doyle's rejoinder, reflects the views of many who have tangled polemically with him over the years. "I was furious," she says. "I was very annoyed because he called my position 'bizarre,' which is putting down rather than confronting my argument." Doyle maintains that he did confront her argument and that only space restrictions prevented him from acknowledging the nuances of her position.

'He's got one of those bulldog minds.... It's like a pit bull gets on your leg and you can't get it off.'

Doyle's letter writing reveals a willingness to take a stand, no matter how unpopular the issue. Exhibit A: His ardent defense of Pius XII and the pope's role in the Holocaust. Although Doyle admits that Pius XII was not a hero during the Holocaust, he feels that Pius has been unjustly cast as the bad guy. "I have no shame insisting that the church be treated fairly in a controversy like this, and it's been treated anything but." His research on this issue illustrates his own commitment to homework: He has pored over old issues of the *New York Times* and other publications on microfilm and read virtually every English-language book on the church and the Holocaust. "Stubborn" is another way of describing Doyle. "He's got one of those bulldog minds," says Schroth. "It's like a pit bull gets on your leg and you can't get it off. That's the way he is on Pius XII."

And like a pit bull, Doyle is ready to pounce at any moment. All the Doyle friends I spoke with recalled a typical "Doyle-*ian*" story. Jim Dwyer came up with this one: One summer in Alabama, Dwyer and Doyle hired a local fisherman to take them out on the Gulf of Mexico. During the ride, the boatsman pointed out a shore town and said, "That's where the niggers live." The boatsman then went on to point out other sites on the shoreline. About a minute later, Kevin said to him, "I was named for a black saint, Martin de Porres. My son is named after Martin Luther King, and I really don't like that word."

"I don't know anybody in public life or in private life who takes his principles and lives them as closely as Kevin does," says Dwyer. "And his principles are entirely rooted in Catholic theology."

Doyle maintains, however, that his interest in Pius XII and other controversies remain occasional avocations. The bulk of his time is committed to his work and his family. He and Mary and their children—Nora (10), Aiden (8), and Conor (6)—live in a modest home in South Nyack, New York. Aiden's birth announcement read, "That's right! It's Aiden Martin King Doyle! We're skipping the Luther since we're papist and loyal." Conor's middle name is Nicolini (which Doyle will playfully rhyme with jelly-beany), named after the Italian bishop who helped to protect Jews during World War II. Each of the children attends Catholic school. Sullivan works part-time as a nurse practitioner. Doyle also finds time to tend a vegetable garden, go grocery shopping for his mother (his father died when he was in law school), and kayak alone on the Hudson River.

Sitting in his Manhattan office on a recent afternoon, Doyle reminds one, to use an older Catholic trope, of a lonely soldier of the church (an appropriate metaphor since he once seriously considered becoming a Jesuit). He admits to feeling more in common with a Baptist colleague, who believes in the existence of absolute truth, than he does with most of his fellow Catholics. Friends and colleagues hint that with Doyle's commitment to civic life and dedication to the poor, he could seek public office someday, but Doyle knows that his moral views preclude much of a political future.

What then to make of Kevin Doyle? Whether one first meets him in person or in print, his aggressive (if not combative) nature, acute mind, and relentless pursuit of the truth are immediately obvious. And that can be more than a little bit daunting. For a novice journalist like myself, interviewing such a publicly querulous individual was an intimidating task. I've been visited by an occasional nightmare about letters to the editor which begin with my name taken in vain and go downhill from there. But you don't have to know Doyle well before you begin to understand why he is so cherished by his friends and family. In a day when debate over moral issues often begins and ends with a "whatever," Doyle has thought seriously and scrupulously about what it means to adhere to a set of religiously based principles.

If you are at all sympathetic to the causes Doyle champions, the temptation arises to try to persuade him to tone down his rhetoric—to adapt himself to those in the public and the press who are suspicious of outspoken Catholics. But finally it's impossible to separate Doyle's passion from his reasoned conviction, his eagerness to engage an adversary from his dedication to those in desperate need of his help. Kevin Doyle is a package deal. He is a wily and stubborn defender of the defenseless who—maybe to blow off a little steam—brings the same instinct for the jugular to his participation in the more decorous world of civic life. Does he make some people uncomfortable? You bet. And you sense that Kevin Doyle wouldn't want it, and perhaps couldn't even do it, any other way. □

This profile is the first of several that will examine the lives of men and women who in their work or art struggle with the fundamental tensions of religious belief and practice in modern society. The research and writing of these profiles are supported by a grant from the Lilly Endowment.

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STRANGLING CUBA

Does the embargo make sense?

Brian Brown

At the pediatric unit of the Juan Manuel Marques Hospital in Havana, I watch an infant girl struggling for breath in an incubator; her little chest expanding and contracting, in out...in out. Two nurses are monitoring the child's life-support system. Thirty-four years ago at New York Hospital our newborn son was rushed from his mother's arms into an incubator to see if the infusion of pure oxygen would assist his labored breathing long enough for his own lungs to take over.

My son lived. At the window of the Havana pediatric unit, I pray a father's prayer for the life of the Cuban baby, struggling for breath, as my son did, in the incubator. What a miraculous machine! I later learn, on a tour of the hospital, that incubators and parts for incubators are in short supply, as are inhalers to treat asthmatics, parts for kidney dialysis machines, mammogram equipment, defibrillators for heart conditions, film for x-ray machines, and diagnostic equipment of all sorts.

Cuba's shortage of critical medical equipment can be directly attributed to the United States embargo, which is going into its thirty-eighth year and excludes, among other essentials, the importation of medicine and food. Cuban physicians currently have access to less than 50 percent of the new medicines available on the world market, and serious nutritional deficits, particularly among pregnant women, have led to an increase in low-birth-weight babies.

In a devastating indictment of U.S. policy against Cuba, the American Association for World Health (AAWH)—the U.S. committee of the World Health Organization—following a year-long study in 1997, concluded that "the embargo has closed so many windows that in some cases Cuban physicians have found it impossible to obtain lifesaving medicines from any source, under any circumstances."

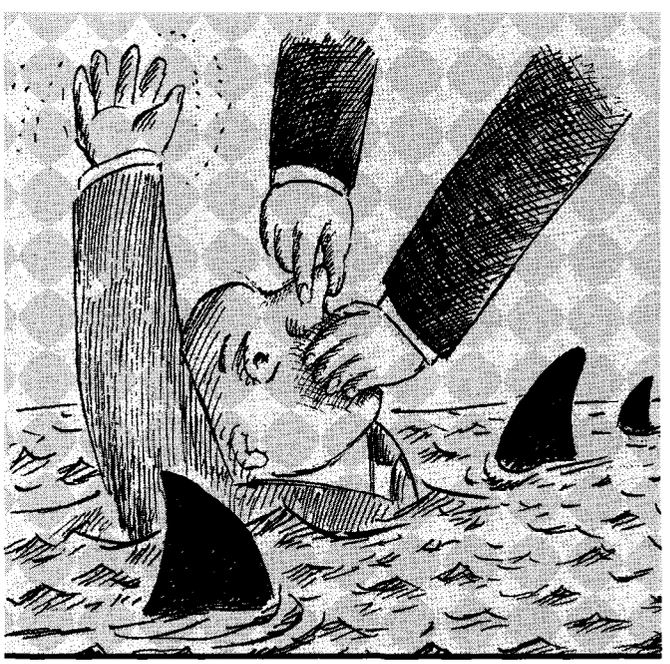
In one instance, the AAWH reports, "Cuban cardiologists diagnosed a heart-attack patient with a ventricular arrhythmia. He required an implantable defibrillator to survive. Though the U.S. firm, CPI, which then held a virtual monopoly on the device, expressed a willingness to make the sale, the United States denied a license for it."

A Swedish corporation was recently prohibited from selling a sophisticated piece of medical equipment to Cuba because it contains a single filter patented under U.S. law. Dozens of other transactions between Cuba and foreign corporations, involving spare parts for x-ray machines from France, neurological diagnostic equipment from Japan, and parts to clean dialysis machines from Argentina are likewise prevented.

Until 1990, all Cuban women over the age of thirty-five received mammograms on a regular basis. Today, without adequate equipment, mammograms are no longer routinely given. In 1994 and 1995, the lack of x-ray film halted all mammograms in Havana.

During my tour of the Juan Manuel Marques Hospital, I learn of children continually vomiting from their chemotherapy treatment, a reaction that is normally minimized with a drug readily available in the United States but denied to Cuba, as are new medications for childhood leukemia and breast cancer.

Dr. Eduardo Sagaro, chief of oncology at the hospital, speaks of the "constant necessity of prescribing around the embargo," that is, "thinking in terms of alternative drugs or alternative methods, if what you prescribe is not available." At the Joaquin Alvabaran Surgical Institute in Havana, Dr. Miguel Arias laments the lack of medications such



Brian Brown, *a free-lance writer and* Commonweal*'s publicist, recently returned from a two-week visit to Cuba with a delegation from Witness for Peace, which was there to assess the impact of the U.S. embargo on the Cuban people.*

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as "antibiotics, analgesics, IV's, as well as syringes, needles, surgical materials, and even oxygen."

A shortage of anesthetics and related equipment has forced a drop in the number of surgeries at Cuban hospitals from 885,790 in 1990 to 536,547 in 1995. Nonprescription drugs such as aspirin are not readily available, nor are disposable needles, necessitating sterilization.

According to the AAWH study, morbidity rates from water-borne diseases have doubled since 1989 because Cuba has been unable to purchase parts for the chlorinating system that treats 70 percent of the country's drinking water.

Ironically, Cubans are not the only ones being hurt by the medical embargo. In 1983, Cuba was confronted by a meningitis B epidemic. Within two years, Cuban medical researchers developed a vaccine. The AAWH now considers Cuba's meningitis B vaccine the most advanced in current production. When Smith Kline Beecham, an international pharmaceutical company, asked the Clinton administration, more than a year ago, for permission to test and possibly improve on the world's most advanced vaccine against meningitis B, their request was ignored.

Until the late 1980s, Cuba's inability to obtain U.S. medical and food supplies was largely offset by imports from the socialist bloc countries and Western Europe. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, and Cuba's loss of revenues, estimated between $4 to $6 billion annually, the embargo suddenly became extremely effective, particularly with the inclusion of two crippling pieces of legislation.

The Cuban Democracy Act, known as the Torricelli Act, for Robert Torricelli (D-N.J.), and lobbied for by wealthy anti-Castro Cuban Americans in Florida and New Jersey, was signed into law in 1992 by President George Bush. It prohibits foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies from trading with Cuba. The Cuba Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act (1995), known as the Helms-Burton Act for cosponsors Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), and Congressman Dan Burton (R-Ind.), prohibits foreign companies from "trafficking" in American property nationalized by Cuba.

Since 1992, the United Nations General Assembly has consistently condemned the blockade against Cuba and called for the United States to rescind provisions of the embargo that violate both the UN charter and international law. The last vote in November was a scathing 157 to 2; the two were the United States and Israel.

In the June issue of *Cigar Aficionado*, Jesse Helms argues that "the real cause of the misery of the Cuban people is not the U.S. embargo"—it is Castro's regime. "The United States must continue the embargo to keep up pressure for change on the island, because if we don't give up our leverage by unilaterally lifting the embargo, Castro's successors will be forced to exchange normalized relations with the United States for a complete democratic transition in Cuba."

In response, Senator Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.) points out that "Cuba is not the only country in the world where government is not democratically elected and where full respect for internationally recognized human rights is lacking." As examples, Dodd cites China, Vietnam, and Russia as countries with which the United States has "no across-the-board trade or investment restrictions and there is no limitation on the freedom to travel."

In calling for repeal of all trade sanctions against Cuba, Dodd characterizes U.S. policy as one "that denies food to hungry Cuban children; that severely limits the availability of medicines and medical supplies to the Cuban people; that denies U.S. citizens the right to travel where they choose; that denies American children access to certain innovative and highly effective Cuban vaccines...."

The Clinton administration—having pursued and accepted campaign contributions from the anti-Castro coalition—recently announced moves to streamline the sale and donation of medicines to Cuba. "It's a charade," says the AAWH. "Donations from U.S. nongovernmental organizations and international agencies do not begin to compensate for the hardships inflicted by the embargo on the Cuban public-health system which is being systematically stripped of essential resources."

On April 29—the day after President Clinton announced that he would allow U.S. companies to sell food and medicine to Iran, Sudan, and Libya, but not Cuba—Dodd and Senator John Warner (R-Va.), along with Representatives Jose Serrano (D-N.Y.) and Jim Leach (R-Iowa), introduced bills in both houses to end the embargo on the sale of food and medicine to Cuba (S. 926 and HR 1644, respectively). The sponsors feel that the existence of identical bills "will allow the House and the Senate to work together to constructively change our nation's policy toward Cuba to a more humane one." □

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Richard Alleva

WILDE FUN

'An Ideal Husband'

Oscar Wilde's play, *An Ideal Husband*, premiered after his earlier successes, *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *A Woman of No Importance*—slick melodramas studded with epigrams but otherwise artistically nil—and was followed by *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a comic work so perfect that a century has done nothing to fray it. *An Ideal Husband* marks not only a chronological but a stylistic half-way point.

Here are two samples from *Husband*. In the first, the blackmailing Mrs. Cheveley, having exposed a youthful piece of shady dealing by the now respected politician, Sir Robert Chiltern, to the latter's wife, is being shown the door.

CHILTERN: Go! Go at once. You have done your worst now.

MRS. CHEVELEY: My worst? I have not yet finished with you, with either of you. I give you both till tomorrow at noon. If by then you don't do what I bid you to do, the whole world shall know the origin of Robert Chiltern.

Sheer claptrap, redolent of *Windermere*. But now, here is Chiltern's best friend, Lord Goring, sybarite supreme, and his man, Phipps, a butler whose imperturbability makes Jeeves look like Screamin' Jay Hawkins. Goring has just remarked that his boutonniere is too solemn.

PHIPPS: I will speak to the florist, my lord. She has had a loss in her family lately, which perhaps accounts for the lack of triviality your lordship complains of in the buttonhole.

LORD GORING: Extraordinary thing about the lower classes in England—they are always losing their relations.

PHIPPS: Yes, my lord! They are extremely fortunate in that respect. (Lord Goring turns around and looks at him. Phipps remains impassive.)

Sheer genius, including that final bit of business which is worthy of Jack Benny and Rochester. And every syllable looks forward to the world of *Earnest*.

Yes, melodramatic rubbish and comic scintillation are at large in this play, and it is to the credit of the adaptation's writer-director, Oliver Parker, that he has not only swept away most of the rubbish and kept much of the spark but he has also brought the melodrama and the comedy into easy coexistence with each other. If the movie script seldom touches the play's peaks, it is nevertheless more coherent.

Parker's method is to scissor a play into strips, trash most of them, and mount the rest *prestissimo*, often in settings the playwright never dreamt of, making free use of cinematic resources for the memories, dreams, and streams-of-consciousness of the characters. It's the traditional "opening up" of a play long practiced by Hollywood hands, but Parker carries it to more extreme lengths. His last job was a slice-and-dicing of *Othello* that turned that economical tragedy into a pusillanimous essay about nothing in particular. But to the less unified *Ideal Husband*, Parker has proved himself an adept play doctor. Fully half the dialogue in this movie is Parker's, and while not as brilliant as Wilde's best, the new stuff at least sounds as if it belongs in the same drama. And, as delivered by a sterling cast, Wilde's epigrams no longer stick out so much *qua* epigrams, but issue fairly naturally out of the normal flow of conversation, as if all these clever people were so overstocked with pearls that they were glad to cast a few away.

Nevertheless, I have mixed feelings about the abridgment. For instance, both of the excerpts above are pretty much eliminated. Good to have the egregious Cheveley toned down but what bliss it would have been to hear Rupert Everett and the great Peter Vaughan have a go at that bit about the florist. True, it doesn't advance the plot, but why do Oscar Wilde if you're interested only in plot?

But Parker has preserved the intellectual panorama of the play ("Mr. Wilde is to me our only thorough playwright. He plays with everything: with wit, with philosophy, with drama, with actors and audience, with the whole theater."—Bernard Shaw), even while making its mood swings less disturbing. This is Wilde-on-wheels: Zippy montages give us the British high society the Irish writer reveled in even as he outraged it—the political dinner parties,

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the balls, the "at homes," the parliamentary debates. Parker serves up what Wilde knew an ambitious person (like himself) could learn to love: society as sensual feast. And this provides the background to one of the play's most important questions: Do effective politicians without big, corrupting appetites actually exist? Oscar Wilde comes to post-Monica America.

On the page, Sir Robert Chiltern is a whiner and Lady Chiltern a prig, and perhaps the greatest triumph of the adaptation is that both characters engage the audience's sympathy. The easier task fell to Jeremy Northam—easier in what he had to play and easier for his particular talent, which is to make earnest men attractive. But Lady Chiltern is more than earnest, being so self-righteous that audience members might dash out of the theater to get away from her. Thanks to Parker's trims to the text and Cate Blanchett's acting, the character is not just tolerable but downright poignant. Blanchett makes us see that when Lady Chiltern learns of her husband's one ethical lapse, an entire world founded on admiration crumbles behind her eyes. Reading the pain on Blanchett's face, we can no more call her a prig than we would a child who has just seen her parents betray a trust.

Though Blanchett may give the best performance, it is Rupert Everett as Lord Goring and Julianne Moore as Mrs. Cheveley who are here the true stars, not because of their acting, but because of the way Parker has restructured and rewritten the script to place their characters at the center of the action. Everett is nifty; Moore courts monotony with her cat-who-swallowed-the-canary smile but gets by on sheer sexual magnetism.

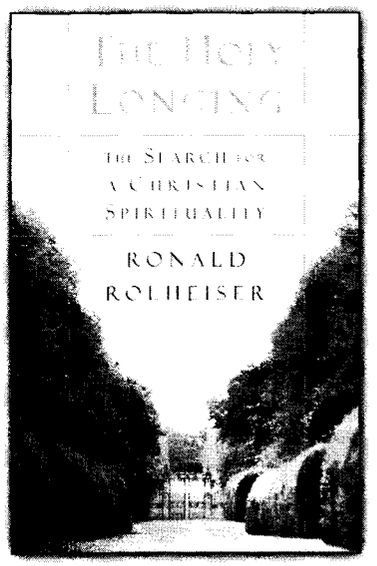
Wilde intended his title to refer to the impossible image Lady Chiltern has of her husband; her emotional education is to learn that there is no such thing as an "ideal husband." But the movie version posits an ideal-husband-in-the-making: Lord Goring. Rich, witty, sexually magnetic, droll but tender, acidic yet compassionate, Goring is here given an additional emotional layer of vulnerability by Parker who designates him the one-time, rejected suitor of Lady Chiltern. So, when Goring bestirs himself on behalf of Lord Chiltern (trying to rescue both his career and marriage), Goring is saving the very man who once bested him in the game of love.

In the play, Goring manages the retrieval of an incriminating letter by simply blackmailing the blackmailer, but in the film the two play upon their very real feelings for each other. Mrs. Cheveley really wants this man, not just for his money but because he is her equal in wit and sexual assurance. Their mutual choice of weapon is seduction, not extortion. The camera is tight on the ex-lovers; we hear the nuances in their voices, the intermittencies of their breathing, and the guarded longing in their eyes. No shoulders gleam like Julianne Moore's (especially in cinematographer David Johnson's appreciative lighting), and Lord Goring would plainly like to sink his teeth into them. These two could make beautiful decadent music together were it not for the fact that it is part of Mrs. Cheveley's decadence not to be able to trust or to give, and it's on this inability that all possible reunion between the lovers founders. We are meant to think that, having transcended Mrs. Cheveley, Lord Goring is now ready for the true-hearted Mabel Chiltern (Sir Robert's sister) and that he will make her, if not an ideal husband, a damn fine one.

Almost I was persuaded. Trouble is, Everett and Moore look too good together. They are the most Wildean elements in this movie with their wit, facility for intrigue, sensual delectations, and amateur Nietzschean philosophy, and I can no more believe that Lord G. would rest content with honest Mabel after savoring the dangerous Mrs. C. than I could believe Oscar Wilde himself might ever have rested content in the bosom of his loving family after enjoying the dangers of "feasting with panthers."

Still, Oliver Parker has given us one of the most enjoyable movies of the year. Out of Wilde's too-abundant smorgasbord, Parker has served up a light, alfresco lunch, something perfect for a summer afternoon. □

"REMINISCENT OF THE BEST WORK OF HENRI NOUWEN AND DANIEL BERRIGAN."*



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Elizabeth Kirkland Cahill

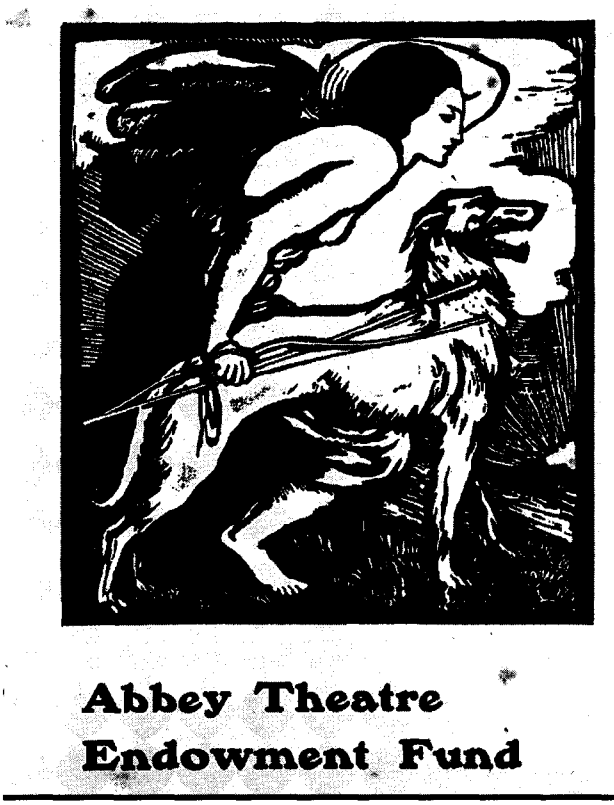
IRELAND'S POET

'Such Friends: The Work of W.B. Yeats'

"Such Friends: The Work of W.B. Yeats," on view through September 11 at the New York Public Library's Humanities and Social Sciences Library (Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street), considers this greatest of Irish poets by way of his many professional and personal relationships. While such an indirect approach may take the exhibition beyond the reach of the uninitiated, to those who already know and love Yeats, there is much to learn. Within the library's muted marble exhibition hall are gathered 250 books, manuscripts, drawings, and photographs that illuminate both the context and the subtext of Yeats's poetry: his Irish ancestry, his work in the Abbey Theater, his role in the Irish literary renaissance, his fascination with the occult, his many friendships and loves. The exhibition takes its title from the oft-quoted final couplet of "The Municipal Gallery Revisited": "Think where man's glory most begins and ends/And say my glory was I had such friends."

This is a homegrown exhibition, most of its materials drawn from the library's Berg Collection of English and American literature, specifically the papers of the Irish writer and patriot Lady Augusta Gregory, who was a lifelong close friend of Yeats. Not every poet or artist of the twentieth century could support an exhibition based on his or her circle of friends and family, but in this case, the concept is sound. Yeats's private and public lives interpenetrate like the cone-shaped gyres that figure in some of his poems. He drew the themes and images for his poetry from the welter of his experiences with such friends as Maud Gonne, John O'Leary, Olivia Shakespeare, Ezra Pound, J.M. Synge, John Quinn, Lady Gregory, and his father, the painter John Butler Yeats. Accordingly, around nearly every corner in the exhibition, the visitor encounters a familiar face.

The initial sections deal with Yeats's family and early influences. Born in 1865 in Dublin, son of a "brilliant but impractical painter," grandson and great-grandson of rectors of the Church of Ireland, from an early age Willie imbibed myths and fairy tales of the Irish countryside during summers spent at his maternal grandparents' home at Sligo. While the mantle of Irishness he assumed as a young poet surely drew on this early exposure, it was in truth a more calculated decision, arising in part from his association with the political leader John O'Leary, another early influence.



Each section uses a variety of materials to illustrate the breadth of Yeats's engagement with both ideas and people throughout his life. In a letter to O'Leary, the young poet defends his interest in magic and the occult: "The mystical life is the centre of all that I do & all that I think & all that I write....I have always considered my self a voice of what I beleive [*sic*] to be a greater renaisance [*sic*]—the revolt of the soul against the intellect—now begining [*sic*] in the world." (So inconsistent was Yeats's spelling that the curator has placed explanatory notes about it throughout the gallery.) Many of the friends Yeats would celebrate in his poetry are introduced early on: the beautiful Irish patriot Maud Gonne (to whom Yeats proposed five times, unsuccessfully), the loyal and steadfast Lady Gregory, and John Quinn, an Irish-American lawyer and arts patron who was a friend to the poet and his father.

One of my favorite sections details Yeats's work with the Abbey Theatre, which he, Edward Martyn, and Lady Gregory founded in 1904 to produce Irish plays on Irish soil. A small pamphlet titled "Abbey Theatre Endowment Fund" announces a drive to raise five thousand pounds for the theater, to keep it "vigorous, intellectual, and courageous for another half-dozen years." In amusing proximity is a letter from Yeats to the manager of an Abbey touring company: "The Abbey Company is as difficult to manage as a South American republic." (The Abbey was neither the first nor the last nonprofit to experience a disjunction between fund-raising rhetoric and front-line reality.) Many of the theater programs and manuscripts in this section, as elsewhere in the exhibition, are festooned in the margins with wonderful pencil or pen sketches of contemporaries

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made by Yeats's father or his brother Jack, also an artist. Particularly noteworthy is a pair of sketches of James Joyce, whose famous brushoff of Yeats in 1902 ("I have met you too late. You are too old.") is described here. And there is a caustic letter from Sean O'Casey, who broke irrevocably with Yeats over the Abbey's rejection of O'Casey's play *The Silver Tassie*: "Does [Yeats] take me to be such a dish of skimmed milk that I would do such a shuffling, lying thing [as withdraw the play]?"

Another small delight is a letter the poet wrote to Lady Gregory from America, where John Quinn arranged a lecture tour for Yeats in 1903–04: "I have been delighted by the big merry priests of Notre Dame—all Irish & proud as lucifer [*sic*] of their success in getting Jews & nonconformists to come to their college." Also gracing this section is a humorous sketch on a Christmas letter from Jack Yeats to John Quinn, depicting the cravat-clad Yeats declaiming on the Psaltery in "the wild and woolly west," standing at the caboose rail before a group of roughnecks in sombreros and Indian headdresses.

As it progresses, the exhibition traces the increasing vigor and directness of Yeats's poetry as he doffs the mask of attenuated Irish romanticism, in volumes such as *Responsibilities* and *The Wild Swans at Coole*, well represented here by manuscripts. The wall panels offer especially helpful background information and explication of the many manuscripts and galleys. "Upheavals," the next-to-last section, neatly captures the relatedness of Yeats's life and work, including under that rubric both his marriage, at the age of fifty-two, to Bertha Georgie Hyde-Lees, and the Easter Rising of 1916. His marriage to the much younger "George," as she preferred, is rightly credited for its immense importance: It gave him a sense of security and abundance, and supplied him with a witty, shrewd, and energetic companion who tended to much of the business side of his life. Nowhere was her shrewdness more apparent than on her honeymoon, when she first "discovered" that she possessed the gift of automatic writing—this access to the spirit world immediately calmed her husband's troubled state of mind about his marriage. The first preserved page of her conversation with the Beyond is on display, round illegible scrawl slanting up the page.

Yeats's poetry improved with the years, and thus a visitor may be inclined to linger over the materials in the exhibition's last section, "Final Works." Along with some wonderful documents relating to *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, which Yeats (infamously) edited, and a moving letter describing the death of Lady Gregory, there is a fascinating group of manuscripts demonstrating the poet's struggle with one of his last poems, "The Circus Animals' Desertion." The collection of heavily marked manuscripts here shows vividly how Yeats worked and reworked the poem's famous final section, deleting lines, shuffling word order, replacing words, setting the poem aside for months, gradually drawing closer to the final version, which concludes:

> Now that my ladder's gone,
> I must lie down where all the ladders start,
> In the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart.

Yeats died in 1939 in the south of France. Because of the wartime blockade, it was not until 1948 that his body was returned to Ireland, where, in a neat twist of circumstance, it was received by government official Sean MacBride—the son of Maud Gonne. The exhibition is ornamented throughout with just such little tidbits, sparks of humor, and small flashes of information that shed light on the complexities of Yeats and his poetry. While it may lack the comprehensiveness to convert nonbelievers, those of us who consider Yeats among the greatest poets of the twentieth century would do well to visit the "municipal gallery" in which "Such Friends" is housed. □

Elizabeth Kirkland Cahill *is co-author, with Joseph Papp, of* Shakespeare Alive!

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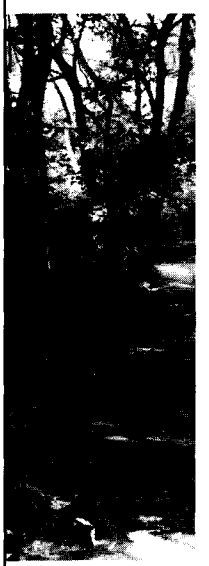

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No fairy tale

Tomi
A Childhood under the Nazis
Tomi Ungerer
Tomico, $29.95, 175 pp.

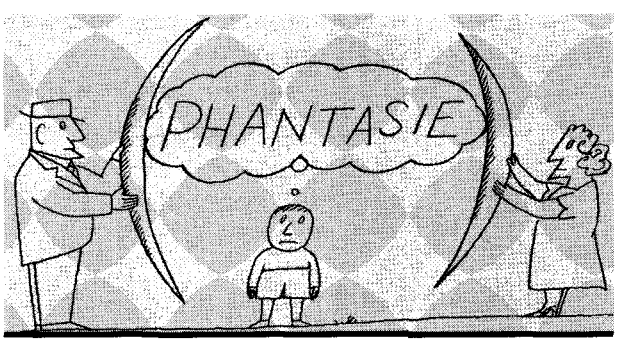
Daria Donnelly

Alsatian graphic artist Tomi Ungerer is best known for the children's books he made between 1957 and 1974 while living in New York City. Sophisticated, satiric, and haunting, this body of work (twenty-two original books and forty others illustrated) is accurately measured by Maurice Sendak's blunt praise: "Tomi Ungerer has never failed the picture book." Adults of that era may also remember Ungerer's bitter sexual cartooning, his searing and macabre posters opposing the Vietnam War, and the specific impress he made on the New York streetscape with irreverent billboards designed for the *New York Times*, the New York State Lottery, and the *Village Voice*, among others.

Since the late 1970s, Ungerer has divided his time between his father's house in Strasbourg and a home in rural Ireland, where an American neighbor, Jack Van Zandt, importuned Ungerer to publish the books he had continued to make over the last twenty-five years. *Tomi: A Childhood under the Nazis* is the third edition of a largely visual memoir first published in French (1991) and, subsequently, German. In it, Ungerer fills out the story of a childhood which underlies the vision and imagery of his early and more recent (*Flix*, *Tortoni Tremolo*) picture books.

Ungerer was eight when Germany invaded Alsace in June 1940. As a result of the Franco-German War, the region had been part of Germany from 1871 to 1918, and the invading Nazis were determined to purge all evidence of an indigenous Gallic culture. The Nazi administrators immediately outlawed the French language in school and home. They burned French books, sent Alsatian teachers to Germany for reeducation, renamed streets, and criminalized the wearing of berets. They even required that Alsatians Germanize their children's names. Thus, Tomi, né Jean Thomas, was called Hans throughout the German occupation and annexation of Alsace, to which Vichy France formally consented in June 1941.

Already a talented draftsman, young Ungerer began a double life, both of which he considers "distorted." At school he obediently fulfilled assignments to copy out Hitler's sayings and draw a Jew. At home, he ferociously made caricatures—among them a pack of playing cards with Hitler as the Old Maid and portraits of loutish German soldiers, influenced by the Alsatian artist Hansi. From his apartment in Logelbach, just opposite a prison camp that housed first French, later Russian, and finally German soldiers, Ungerer took in and recorded the sheer spectacle of occupation and liberation.



Ungerer's mother saved everything: Tomi's school notebooks, drawings, magazine clippings, and secret diary, along with heaps of other artifacts from the period. Using a generous selection of these objects, Ungerer tells the story of his coming of age and documents how the Fascist propaganda machine invaded the child's world of school and play. This outstanding book's power stems from Ungerer's attention to visual detail and echo, and his honest expression of vivid and contradictory emotions. In his tone, Ungerer keeps faith with adolescence and its equal measures of agitation, detachment, and vulnerability. Ungerer designed *Tomi* for children and adults, and it is appropriate for both, though he pulls no punches.

Above all, Ungerer makes us feel the depth of the Nazi invasion of childhood. The children of this era can never return to innocence nor draw upon resources of childhood that are untainted. Ungerer confesses that when he is overwhelmed by the anxiety and insecurity to which he is prone, and which this period surely bequeathed him, he is cheered best by the Nazi marching songs of his school days. He shows us dozens of delicate miniature figurines that Alsatian children sold on the street on behalf of a Nazi organization to aid indigents. Later Ungerer discovered that these highly prized collectibles were made by concentration camp internees.

Ungerer refuses to simplify or render merely ironical the contradictory nature of his childhood experiences. This lends the memoir an unusual moral authority not only as it touches on fascism but on family life as well. In particular, he portrays his mother, widowed when Tomi was three, with a tumult of feeling. Alice Ungerer is shown as resourceful and suf-

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focating, freethinking and elitist. Throughout the occupation, she kept the house full of books and maintained an atmosphere in which Tomi and his siblings could pursue their passions (his were drawing, reading, mineralogy, and chemistry). With great daring and surreal obfuscation, she protected them from the worst of required obeisance to the Nazis, for whom she had nothing but contempt. Her prejudices and smothering affection enraged young Tomi, and filled him with shame. It did not help that many of her protective schemes involved exaggerating his inborn fragility.

Liberation was as filled with contradiction as occupation. For the young boy who dashed out of his basement shelter to collect hot shrapnel after bombing raids, the long-awaited demise of the Nazis was exciting and terrible. But when he saw French troops beating German POWs, Ungerer was devastated: "This disturbing vision canceled out whatever hope and innocence I had left." The liberating French moved swiftly to erase not simply Nazi but German culture from Alsace: destroying, among others, Ungerer's own school library, and forbidding Alsatian, a German dialect and the lingua franca of the region, for the next twenty-five years. Ungerer documents the weird likenesses in the double purging of his region, down to the cards placed on café tables which urged the language of the moment.

The book concludes on a note of hope, the final image a migrating stork, the symbol of Alsace, returning in 1945 to nest atop a bombed-out building. But it is hard-earned hope. With characteristic understatement, Ungerer briefly sketches his fifty years of movement from a fatalistic postwar bewilderment to a valuable insecurity: "that we are each of us born with a life sentence (which is easier to survive with a smile), and that a conscience is more effective when tortured...and doubt is a virtue with enough living space for every imperfect, sin-ridden, life-loving creature on earth." □

Daria Donnelly, *a frequent contributor, lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.*

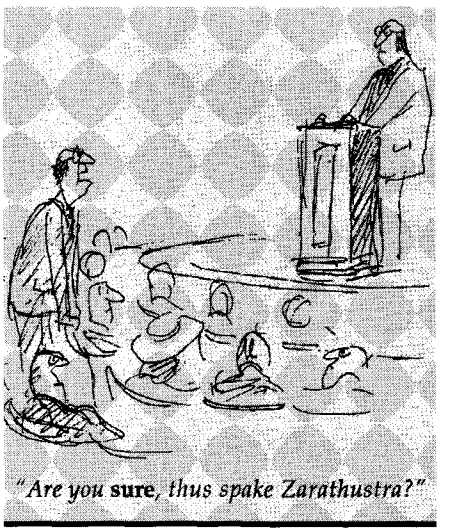
TOO VIVID A MEMORY

The Holocaust in American Life
Peter Novick
Houghton Mifflin, $27, 373 pp.

Lawrence Douglas

What is the value of preserving the memory of the Holocaust's radical evil? The most familiar answer finds expression in the shibboleth, "Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it." Implicit in this view is the idea that memory serves as a tool of liberation: Only by vigilantly minding the past can we hope to create a less hateful future.

Such vigilance has turned the project of preserving memories of the Holocaust into a major industry. Countless books, movies, videos, memorials, and museums are devoted to keeping the Nazis' campaign to exterminate the Jews of Europe from drifting out of our collective consciousness and conscience. And while some groups—such as Armenian-Americans—might envy the success that American Jews have had in riveting the nation's attention upon the past sufferings of their coreligionists, no one, except perhaps a bizarre fringe of Holocaust deniers, seems to question the wisdom and necessity of keeping the memories of genocide alive.



"Are you **sure**, *thus spake Zarathustra?"*

No one, that is, except Peter Novick. In *The Holocaust in American Life*, Novick has written an important, brave, and somewhat irritating book about the cult of Holocaust memory in the United States. Though trained as a historian (Novick teaches at the University of Chicago and has authored, among other works, a well-respected study of Vichy France), Novick has not penned yet another history of the Final Solution. Instead, following the lead of scholars such as Henri Roussou and Maurice Halbwachs, Novick has written a book about the history of collective memory. *The Holocaust in American Life* studies how, over the past half-century, Nazi genocide has been remembered in this country—and why.

As a history of memory, Novick's book promises to solve a riddle of time and place. Why, he asks, has our preoccupation with the Holocaust grown rather than diminished with time, and why is it so important in this country, of all places? To answer these questions, scholars of the Holocaust have often relied on Freud's theory of trauma and repressed memory. Nazi genocide, it was argued, so traumatized our collective psyche that it could be meaningfully confronted only decades after the original crime.

Novick, by contrast, has little use for such psychoanalytic explanations. His interest is the politics of memory— how concerns in the present, strategically and subtly, serve to shape our uses and recollections of the past. In the early postwar years, Novick argues, American Jews had little use for the Holocaust. Sharing in the prosperity of these years, American Jews were reluctant to be seen as connected to a group of hapless old-world victims. Moreover, cold-war hostilities made Jewish groups reluctant to harp on the crimes of Germany, now an ally, as they feared that in so doing they

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would resurrect old canards about the affinities between Jews and the Red menace.

Isolated events, such as the publication of Anne Frank's diary in 1952 and the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961, served to bring the Holocaust closer to the consciousness of Americans in general and Jews in particular. Yet it was not until the early seventies, Novick argues, that American Jews "discovered" the Holocaust. The Yom Kippur war in 1973 was the catalytic event. Stunned by the early military successes of Syria and Egypt, American Jews suddenly came to see Israel not as the tiny but invincible force of the Six Day War, but as a vulnerable nation facing potential annihilation. American Jews were gripped with fears of a second Holocaust, and used these fears to petition the government for needed military assistance to Israel.

A second potent threat to the American Jewish community came from within. The very successes of Jews within America fueled an ethos of aggressive assimilationism which, in turn, threatened to destroy the community through such practices as intermarriage. In the face of this threat, the rhetoric of the Holocaust again found itself usefully deployed—both to characterize the magnitude of the danger, and, more important, to offer a picture of Jewish identity that could appeal to the secular sensibilities of American Jews. According to this view, it did not matter whether a Jew identified with the commitments of the religion; all that mattered was whether one would have been considered a Jew for Hitler's purposes.

Having discovered the Holocaust, Jews, in turn, have been remarkably successful in persuading the rest of America to share in the memorialization and sacralization of their experience. This, Novick explains, is because Jews are not simply "the people of the book," but more to the point, "the people of the Hollywood film and the television miniseries, of the magazine article and the newspaper column, of the comic book and the academic symposium." Such a claim, of course, comes perilously close to echoing classically anti-Semitic arguments that "the Jews own the media," and in making it Novick at once reminds his reader of his own Jewish identity, while also insisting that his description of the influence and prestige of Jews is a statement of fact, not a condemnation.

Yet there is a distinctly critical edge to Novick's book, and he enlists his carefully elaborated historical argument to attack the contemporary cult of Holocaust memory. For American Jews, Novick argues, the cult of memory is particularly destructive. First, it siphons attention away from the beliefs, practices, and culture of a fantastically rich and complex religious history by defining Jewishness in terms of a shared legacy of victimization. This, in turn, merely exacerbates the worst aspects of contemporary identity politics, as blacks and Jews find themselves pitted in a tribal struggle to be recognized as America's most aggrieved minority.

The cult of Holocaust memory is also unhealthy for all Americans, Novick argues. Instead of sensitizing our consciousness to acts of atrocity here and abroad, an over-fixation on the Holocaust can cripple judgment and paralyze action. Indeed, the very radicality of the Nazis' crimes against the Jews may leave us convinced that only the most extreme, Holocaust-style atrocities deserve our humanitarian attention, if not our military intervention.

In lieu of the cult of memory, however, Novick has precious little to offer. He concludes with the weak plea that we make "more informed and thoughtful choices" about how we remember the Holocaust. Not only does he neglect to tell us what such informed choices might look like, but he suggests that collective memory is simply a matter of decision and will. In committing himself to such a position, he ignores the organic and spontaneous quality of collective memory—the ways in which it resists strategic manipulation.

More troubling, Novick refuses to give credence to the idea that our continued fascination with the Holocaust may have something to do with the intrinsic importance of the event itself. Here he completely overlooks the works of scholars who, in the words of Richard Rubenstein, locate in the Holocaust an "expression of many of the most profound tendencies of Western civilization in the twentieth century."

But if the book does not fully convince, it certainly provokes. Though at times Novick presents his controversial positions in a tone that seems needlessly polemical, in general his writing is clear and uncluttered. For those of a more scholarly bent, he has appended a substantial apparatus of footnotes. Yet the book addresses not the professional historian, but the serious lay reader—Jew and non-Jew alike. Though it offers a sturdy history of memory, *The Holocaust in American Life* is ultimately a cautionary tale. It warns of the costs, not of failing to remember, but of refusing to forget. □

Lawrence Douglas *is an associate professor in the Department of Law, Jurisprudence, and Social Thought at Amherst College. His study of the Nuremberg, Eichmann, and Zundel trials,* The Memory of Judgment, *is forthcoming from Yale University Press.*

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A CLEARER VISION

Sight Unseen
Georgina Kleege
Yale University Press, $25, 233 pp.

F. González-Crussi

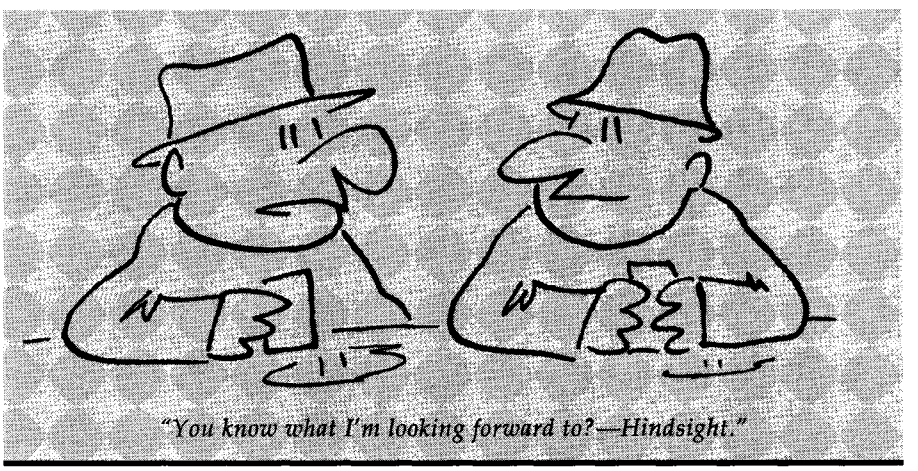
Blindness may be counted among the nightmare terrors of the hale and hearty. The well-known lines of Milton in *Samson Agonistes*, "Blind among enemies, O worse than chains, / Dungeon or beggary, or decrepit age!" have a poignancy that touches the very core of this fear. It is a sad reflection on contemporary society that the sightless are not merely blind. They are, as in the Miltonian expression, "blind among enemies," since they live among people who fear, loathe, repulse, abhor, and—if it were in their power—would avoid the mere mention of blindness and the blind. We fear what we do not understand, and sightlessness is undoubtedly one of the least understood forms of disability. And yet, many of us will have to live with diminished and diminishing eyesight. As the aging population grows, so does the number of the visually impaired. Two-thirds of individuals considered "legally blind" are over fifty-five years of age, and 25 percent of the elderly will develop cataracts.

Sight Unseen, by Georgina Kleege, is a book that goes a long way toward promoting a balanced attitude that seeks to understand the implications, and therefore mitigate the pangs, of this affliction. It exposes the smugness, the cant commiseration, the hypocritical complacency, and outright irrationality with which the blind must daily contend. The fact that the author is blind is germane to this book's superior merit. This circumstance imparts to every page the power of concrete personal experience, which is more appealing, and strikes the reader more forcefully, than abstract generalities or second-hand impressions. But it is not an autobiography. The author tells us at the outset that her purpose is not introspection, a kind of narrative in which the blind, undistracted by the spectacle of outer reality, have traditionally excelled. Rather, Kleege introduces us candidly, gently, without unseemly gesturing, and with not even a shade of self-pity, into the ordinary experience that controls daily life bereft of visual function. Next, she holds a mirror to the world, and by allowing us to look on ourselves, makes us see how the blind, in their turn, perceive us. For the blind *see* the sighted, and theirs is, by far, the finer percipience.

With an impeccable, elegantly sparing prose, Georgina Kleege scans the widespread prejudices. One chapter examines the way in which the blind are represented in film. It may seem a cruel joke, worthy of a farce of dubious taste, that a blind person should launch into a discussion of films; but this impression only underscores the prevailing ignorance about blindness. Very few are those who suffer the full tragedy of sudden and total loss of vision. In most cases, the world does not sink abruptly into complete blackness, but fades gradually in a mist that stunts the contours of things and erases their colors. Or else the center of the visual field is blotted out, as if marred by slowly spreading soot, while the periphery remains unsullied. Alternatively, as happens due to enlarging lesions that compress certain parts of the visual system inside the skull, the periphery is obscured, and the center stays clear, as if the observer peeked at the world through a progressively narrowing tube. In any case, sufficient time elapses for the patient to adjust to the loss, and to develop compensatory mechanisms that partly reverse it (tilting the head a certain way, bringing objects into exaggerated proximity with the eyes, and so on). Moreover, one "sees" with more than just the eyes. Sundry auditory stimuli—the musical score, the reaction of the audience—joined with partial or mutilated vision, enable many legally blind persons to form an objectively valid opinion on movies.

As to the cinematic portrayal of the blind, it is far from accurate. "Actors [adopt] an unblinking, zombie stare, directing their gazes upward to give the face of a supplicating look of helplessness." For the stereotype is generally negative, dwelling on the utter dependency, and the attendant timidity, resentment, crankiness, and social alienation of the blind. From Terence Young's thriller *Wait until Dark* in the 1960s, to Martin Brest's film *Scent of a Woman*, with Al Pacino in the 1990s, Kleege concludes that the treatment of the blind on the cinematic screen has been mostly exploitative or biased.

Interesting chapters bear on the depiction of the blind in literature, the cultural significance of "eye contact," and varied aspects of the psychophys-



"You know what I'm looking forward to?—Hindsight."

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iology of vision, in a language that should make difficult concepts accessible to nonspecialist readers. But the tone is never dry or didactic. Savory vignettes and asides, ranging from personal anecdotes and reflections to a brief sketch of the life and times of Louis Braille (of tactile-reading fame), add zest to the work, which, in the finest tradition of nonfiction writing, delights and instructs at the same time.

The worthiest teaching of *Sight Unseen*, however, is not to be sought in the transmittal of vision-related information. It is a higher, more valuable lesson: the demonstration that the plight of the blind is partly its own reality, and largely the creation of the normally sighted. As Kleege puts it, "what you fear is not the inability to adapt to the loss of sight, it is the inability of people around you to see you the same way. It's not you, it's them." A wiser, better-balanced concept must emerge. For many of us are bound to be disabled one way or another, visually or otherwise. We should thus learn to consider blindness as other than irredeemable wretchedness. Jorge Luis Borges—a blind man himself—wrote that blindness "must not be thought of in a pathetic way but as a way of life: *as one of the styles of man's life.*" □

F. González-Crussi, M.D. *is head of the Department of Pathology of the Children's Memorial Hospital of Chicago. His latest book is* There Is a World Elsewhere.

A LITTLE ADVICE

How to Do It
Guides to Good Living for Renaissance Italians
Rudolph M. Bell
University of Chicago Press, $25, 374 pp.

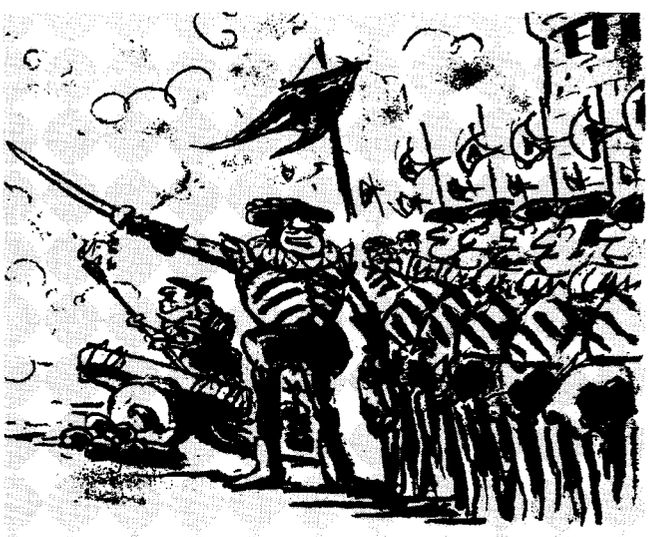
Dennis O'Brien

This is the perfect book for a family vacation. Sitting in your summertime rocker, you can turn to the attendant spouse and say, "Listen to this! You want to know a recipe for male potency? Pietro Andrea Mattioli (1500–77) recommends nasturtiums eaten whole, seeds of nettle mixed with wine, or kidneys of saltwater lizard." Count Giovanni Maria Bonardo's jesting marriage advice (*Compagnia della lesina*, 1591): a big dowry and a small wife—you can economize by purchasing a smaller bed!

Worried about that surly adolescent lurking about the household? Cardinal Silvio Antoniano has him pegged: "Adolescents are self-indulgent, greedy...often volatile and contradictory, changing from one moment to the next, quickly tiring of the old and ready for anything new...totally impractical, unwilling to listen to advice...easily deceived, malleable as wax, sociable only with their own kind, quick to make friends if it leads to pleasure seeking..." (*Tre libri dell' educatione christiana*, 1584). Pius XI in his 1929 encyclical on Christian education, *Rappresentanti in terra*, termed Antoniano's work a "golden treatise."

Rudolph M. Bell has collected 292 pages (plus 68 pages of footnotes) of such sixteenth-century advice on everything from conception to widowhood. Deliberately avoiding the literary monuments of the age, for example, Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, Bell has rummaged in Italian archives and backrooms for the popular pamphleteers of the day. General advice for the (then newly) literate public has a continuous history right down to Miss Manners. As Bell notes: "Brother Cherubino gave way to Alex Comfort, Dr. Michele Savanarola to Dr. Benjamin Spock...Cardinal Silvio Antoniano to Bishop Fulton J. Sheen." (Miss Manners is new, however. With rare exception, it was males who handed out nostrums and admonitions in the sixteenth century.)

Three hundred pages of archaic biology and scattershot advice from an assortment of clerics, moralists, and mountebanks produce significant head-shaking: sometimes in wonder at the daffiness of it all (did males really tie off their left testicles during intercourse in order to produce male offspring?); occasionally with a nod: "It has been always thus!" (adolescents are "ready for anything new"). There is a continuum from the bizarre to the judicious which runs roughly from the biological to the psychological. Renaissance biology was so inaccurate that any advice based on such "science" was bound to be weird and mistaken. Thus, the left side was regarded as the female side leading to the above-mentioned testicular advice and the further caution that the woman should lie on her right side after intercourse so that the male seed would lodge in one of the three right-sided male chambers of the uterus. (The uterus was said to have seven chambers: three left-



"Remember, men, the enemy will be facing you in cheap ready-to-wears; you'll be fighting them in uniforms designed by Michelangelo."

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Becoming Light

"Let them learn how to live and die more lightly."
Czeslaw Milosz

Mists rise in the valleys, skim off
with the breath of farm ponds.
As when we are no longer weighted down
with wants. Even as gravity pulls
us closer to our mother, Gaea,
even as the flesh draws down, flattens,
squeezes bony discs, compacts them,
we must levitate, glide across that distance,
smell that lap of death as waters
wash and waste the shore,
the eyes see farther, can now
make out the riffles on the far bank
as the fisherman slides in
on a muted motor's momentum.
Whole peoples have let go,
drifted off like dry leaves,
whole species slipped away,
and in the night, while we slept,
the incredible weight of a woman,
all of her, disappeared, all her words
and prejudices and opinions
and determinations and plans,
and projects and memories
and wants all evaporated.
On good days,
I rehearse this moment,
lift the weights one by one,
test their densities in my palm,
raise a wetted finger to the wind.

Carol Hamilton

sided female chambers and one in the middle for hermaphrodites, who must have been more prevalent in the sixteenth century than today.)

In contrast to bad biology, there was generous and loving psychological advice on the raising of children. Both advice manuals and erudite texts gave a "unitary, coherent approach to child rearing...with advocacy of demand feeding for infants...portrayals of the innocent babe in no danger of becoming spoiled...pages on how to encourage the child to choose good behavior rather than punishing him for being bad...." Bell notes the benevolence of the Italian attitude toward child rearing in contrast to later American biblicist justifications for severity and the lash as detailed in Philip Greven's *Spare the Child* (Random House, 1992).

Modern readers of almost any persuasion will be put off by the dominant, dominating stance of the male of the species in all the texts. Small wonder, then, that when a female voice does emerge as in Moderata Fonte's *Il merito delle donne*, we hear the young widow Lenora reply to the suggestion that she remarry: "What, me remarry? I'd rather drown than submit again to any man. I escaped slavery and imprisonment. Are you suggesting I voluntarily become enchained again? God watch over me."

I think that Bell gets it right when he confesses at the conclusion that what he would really like to do is "join you [the reader] for an informal chat, maybe over drinks or lunch....I miss knowing what you made of my book." Therein is the limitation of his indefatigable collection: What does one make of it all?

Bell is largely content to present the texts as such with a minimum of conjecture. So that is what the pamphleteers wrote. Why? Do the writings reflect how women did behave in Renaissance Italy or how they didn't behave? People usually write advice books because they think matters need fixing. Were women being less than obedient to their male consorts? If one takes the example of the Wife of Bath who ran through and over five husbands a couple of centuries earlier and in another land, it would seem that women could be pretty feisty in days of yore. As for human sexuality: pious advice often seems as detached today from prudence and practice as when Lodovico Gabrielli da Oggobio suggested that if you desire a woman you should consider how her body will be when she is dead.

Many of the books cited by Bell went through multiple editions and were best sellers. But advice may have a life of its own, floating well above the question about whether it is needed or heeded. After all, books on morality or dieting may be earnestly read in order to improve behavior or as a substitute for actually doing anything about either vice or fat. I am not sure what one might conclude three centuries from now from the fact that *The Joy of Sex* and *Life Is Worth Living* were twentieth-century best sellers. All we can be sure of is that some cyber-guru will be busily offering counsel and looking back with some mixture of horror and humor on our pop-philosophers. □

Dennis O'Brien, *president emeritus of the University of Rochester, is the author of* All the Essential Half-Truths about Higher Education *(Chicago).*

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(Continued from page 4)

Parkinson's, will have been found.

Is Dr. White prepared to say that, even if it works, it would be wrong—and better that people continue suffering from Parkinson's than that an immoral use be made of fetal tissue? I think I might now and then be prepared to say that, but I doubt that most people in our society would, and surely not most of those with the disease. I am troubled to be saying that, but it seems to me reasonably accurate.

The trouble with the research imperative is that it makes skeptics like myself look cold and indifferent; we uphold high principle while our fellow creatures suffer. I can't feel too good about that, even if that is the way I think I must go. DANIEL CALLAHAN

Problems of pacifism

I found the discussions of "pacifism and genocide" in the issue of June 18 very interesting but my own concerns were not fully dealt with. My questions are more personal than philosophical or theological. Despite my pacifist leanings, I want to know how one can look into the eyes of a young Albanian Kosovar and say, "I did not defend you or give you arms because I do not believe in killing." How does one face a Holocaust survivor and argue that "war is not an appropriate response"? What other than war or revolution could have stopped a Hitler or a Pol Pot or an ethnic rampage? I may sacrifice myself, even my family, but how can I sacrifice others who do not believe as I do?

Much of the antiwar discussion addresses what should have been done to avoid the Kosovo situation, or points out how military action failed to stop the killing or even accelerated it. I have yet to check out the books authored by your contributors, but I have not seen any war critic deal adequately with the facts on the ground in terms that could serve in a dialogue with the victims. All that having been said, I try to maintain my pacifist inclination. Thank you for the discussion.

PAUL GERARD MARX
Shawnee Mission, Kans.

Ignoring the rule of law

In his essay, "Is NATO's War Just?" [May 21], Bruce Russett asks whether approval of the United Nations Security Council should be required to authorize a NATO military campaign. The question is posed in the context of the unwillingness of China and Russia to permit the Security Council to do so in the case of Serbian aggression in Kosovo.

There exists a standard of international law meant to regulate all nation-states, founded on the charter of the United Nations and successive resolutions, as well as judgments of the World Court. The threat or use of force is prohibited if not expressly sanctioned by the Security Council, subsequent to its judgment that peaceful methods have been ineffective, or in self-defense against "armed attack" until the Security Council takes action. The NATO states thus set aside consultative procedures the UN offers for settlement of international disputes.

An exception has been made for "humanitarian intervention" in any number of situations, and NATO claimed this right in Kosovo. Yet the stated humanitarian motive for intervention did not exonerate NATO from finding a viable settlement. The Rambouillet Accords failed to do so. A negotiation that attempted to force a solution by threat of a bombing campaign if Slobodan Milosevic did not accept the demands of Western leaders aggravated the situation in Kosovo. Rambouilllet was offered to the Kosovo Liberation Army as a means to concentrate NATO's military power on Serbia, and it led Milosevic to intensify reprisals against the KLA even before the war began. The subsequent NATO bombings vitiated the already precarious foundation of international law. KENNETH KEULMAN
New Orleans, La.

The writer is professor of ethics at Loyola University in New Orleans.

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'Romanitas' vs. the gospel

I confess genuine discouragement over the response from the Rev. Kevin Rhoades [Correspondence, July 16] to your editorial of April 23 on the *New York Times* article describing the seminarians at Mount Saint Mary's, and to the earlier letters on the same topic.

While Father Rhoades attempts to rebut the charge of growing clericalism, it is frightening that while he cites Popes Paul VI and John Paul II, mentions Vatican II, praises devotion to the Holy Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin Mary, and defends the wearing of clerical attire, he makes reference only once, in passing, to Jesus Christ.

When I was ordained thirty years ago, the ritual called me to become an *alter Christus*, and I thought that's what we're all about. I grow increasingly discouraged as I watch service to the gospel of Jesus Christ being completely replaced by fidelity to Rome. Something is terribly wrong.

(MONSIGNOR) HENRY A. KRIEGEL
La Quinta, Calif.

Shake on it

I couldn't agree more with Mary Margaret Carberry [July 16, "The Wages of Change"] that too much change in too little time can be overwhelming. But to assume that there is a monolithic "Catholic culture" that somehow embraces all Catholics—from cradle to convert, from European to African, from five to ninety-five—and that needs to be protected from steady and sometimes rapid change, is too facile. The best way to maintain a Catholic identity is to ensure that it is inclusive of all Catholics.

Far too often, the call for the "gradual change" that Carberry lauds is used to exclude those who do not fit into the so-called "traditional Catholic culture," whether they are the divorced and remarried, the gay and lesbian, or the convert who was not drawn to the pre-Vatican II church but rather to the more open and accepting-of-diversity post-conciliar church that looks at multiculturalism as a truer manifestation of the gospel. The church's "centuries-old" culture that Carberry treasures is, in fact, only a few hundred years old. The church's true tradition has abundant room for all, whether we worship with tom-toms or well-worn Catholic hymns.

Satisfaction with our own Catholic culture is only possible if it is grounded in the gospel, where there is room for a kiss of peace celebrated with a simple handshake, a bear hug, or a high five.

ELLEN ROBINSON-HAYNES
Fair Oaks, Calif.

Why Christ came

Reader George Ward asks [Correspondence, June 4], What does the pope's recent statement about evolution do to the traditional view of salvation history? Nothing much, I say; or nothing at all.

First: Long before Vatican II (or even Teilhard de Chardin), I was taught, in grammar school catechism no less, that the "clay of the ground" of Genesis 2:7 is not to be taken literally as inorganic material but could represent a lower form of life, say a primate or even a hominid. Revelation is not about *how* God created humans, but that God did so.

Second: Evolution from a single-cell form of life ("from the bottom") in no way precludes a later relapse resulting from Adam's sin; just as a soaring rise of the Dow Jones average does not preclude an eventual crash.

Finally, although many, including Thomas Aquinas, held that Christ would not have come had Adam not sinned, there is a respectable body of opinion holding that the Son would have become incarnate anyway. This dates back at least to Aquinas's Franciscan contemporary, Saint Bonaventure. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (#280) at least implies the same conclusion: "...[T]he mystery of Christ...reveals the end for which 'in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth': from the beginning, God envisaged the glory of the new creation in Christ."

Thus, it is perfectly in keeping with tradition to believe that the Incarnation was not just a kind of "Plan B," an emergency patch-up; rather, it was the original purpose of the very act of creation. Without denying the truths of conceptualizing Christ's mission as teaching, redeeming, etc., his fundamental and ultimate mission was and is the unique and perfect self-communication of God in and to and through God's creation.

EDMUND F. KAL, M.D., S.T.B.
Fresno, Calif.

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...THAT WE'LL BE CELEBRATING THE YEAR 2000 AS A JUBILEE YEAR? Or how? Or why? (JP II calls it the key to his pontificate.) Rome-based author/novelist/lecturer Desmond O'Grady has plentiful, interesting, non-PR-type answers. He's the author of *Rome Reshaped: Jubilees 1300–2000*, forthcoming in September from Continuum in English, and being published in seven other languages. O'Grady will be available for stateside talks/seminars in late August and the first half of September. Those interested should contact Desmond O'Grady, via B. Gosio, 00191 Rome, Italy; fax 011/39/06/3332186; e-mail de.ogrady@agora.stm.it

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'WHY WOULD THEY DO THAT?'

Timothy Shriver

Back in the days of the Great Washington Sex Scandal last year there was gnashing of teeth. "What should we tell the children?" worried parents asked. It wasn't an idle question. What strikes me as strange, however, is that nobody asked the same question this year during the war in the Balkans.

As many as a million people were uprooted. Tens of thousands were killed. A nation was laid waste. Now the bombing and the "cleansing" have stopped, but revenge killings continue. Our kids have had as much access to these horrors as they did to Monicagate. Many Americans were distressed, even sickened, by the reports from Pristina and Belgrade, but nobody, it seems, has focused on what *these* reports might be doing to our children.

Do we think that children are more vulnerable to messages about sexual escapades than they are to the terrifying violence of war? Were they more troubled by whispers of high-level dalliance than by pictures of mothers cradling dead bodies?

Only a few months ago, commentators scrambled to define parameters for discussing with children the lurid sexual details of the Starr report. Some members of Congress asked for a national dialogue on truth telling and family values. Children, the chorus said, are hearing and reading about things they aren't ready to handle. Do they think children can handle war?

Consider: As children watch an ongoing war they see their most horrifying fears come true—fears of loss, of violence; fears that the monsters of their nightmares may become real-life monsters of the day. To assure our children that their inner struggles can be safely resolved, we tell them fairy tales with happy endings. The wartime news presented a different reality. "If it can happen to that little boy in Kosovo," kids wonder, "can it happen to me? Why not?" Just saying "No, it can't happen to you" isn't enough.

It's useful to try to see events and issues the way children see them—useful for the kids and at least as useful for us grown-ups. If we could gain that perspective we might spend a lot of time explaining, or trying to explain, war and other things that don't make sense to them. Maybe we'd have a national dialogue on homelessness: "Mommy, why can't they have a place to live like us?" Or on disability: "Daddy, I saw some kids making fun of a boy with mental retardation. Why would they do that?" Or on meanness: "Grampa, all the time on TV they say such mean things about politicians and famous people. Is that okay?"

In wartime, if we looked through the eyes of children, we'd have an *emergency* dialogue, at least in our own homes, on violence and the fear and trembling over human hatred fully unleashed in war. "Why are those people killing each other?" kids ask. "Why are *we* doing it? It scares me an awful lot." It would be good for us to try to answer, if we didn't pretend that such questions are easy or the answers are simple. By trying to answer as best we can, we tell the children that they've been heard, and that their questions matter. This leads us to questions of faith and issues of justice, things that matter to children. You may have heard children exclaiming (screaming), "It isn't fair!" They're sometimes right.

In our house we say prayers at night before bed, and each child gets to say his or her own prayer. When my son Tim was four he said the same prayer every night: "I hope the army and the navy and the air force will not use their guns and will not go to fight anyone and will not get in any wars." My eleven-year-old daughter Rose prays for her grandmother, who lives alone. Sam, six, always prays for my cousin who died in an accident more than a year ago. And one night during the war, five-year-old Kathleen prayed for all the people in Kosovo. But she didn't pray that it wouldn't happen to her. She prayed that it would "stop right now so the moms and dads and kids can be happy again."

Besides wanting to have their fears addressed and their questions answered, children want to see something done about the horrors they hear about. Not miracles—kids can be pretty realistic—but *something*. So, besides listening to our children's inner voices and responding, we must act on whatever scale is possible. Let's expect our schools and our political and religious leaders to pay attention to the children when terror reigns, whether in Littleton or in Kosovo. Let's listen, but let's also respond with simple deeds like fundraisers for refugees and school-based programs to support the social and emotional needs of children. Let's show our solidarity in action and prayer with those who suffer.

Last year all of us had to endure a great deal of "deepthink" psychologizing about what to tell the children. This year's news has confronted them, and us, with something more serious. Surely we should be thinking about what to tell them. It would be wise if we also attended to what they have to tell us. When I listen, I hear this: "Stop the killing. Give the refugees a place to sleep, food to eat. Give the sick people medicine. Show us that you care and we'll feel safer." □

Timothy Shriver *is president and chief executive officer of Special Olympics, Inc. This article was written before the accident in which the author's cousin, John F. Kennedy, Jr., and Kennedy's wife and sister-in-law, lost their lives. He asks prayers on their behalf.*

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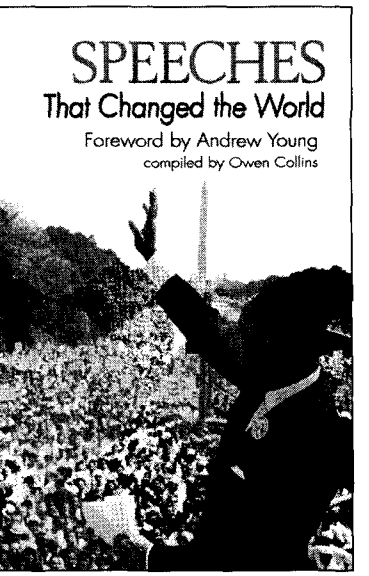

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